

GOVERNMENT— AN IDEAL CONCEPT

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GOVERNMENT— AN IDEAL CONCEPT



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EDITOR'S NOTE

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FOREWORD

THIS ESSAY ASSUMES, but does not document, that all is not well in these United States. The documentation is omitted because it would be a duplication of many studies already published by this Foundation.

The assumption which has motivated this thesis is that, generally speaking, we are experiencing a moral decline. Failure in this direction presages trouble of every kind, for only a people possessing a set of fairly high moral values can prosper for long—spiritually, intellectually, or materially.

In spite of our materialistic emphasis and the popular claim that "We have never had it so good," there is evidence aplenty that we are, short of a change in our ways, slated for materialistic or economic difficulties. Further, what assertion is more in error than "We in America have solved the problem of production"? Persons who say this—their number is large and impressive—may very well not know what the productive process consists of. For the most part, they prove their lack of understanding by advocating measures which inhibit the productive process. All of this essay supports this point.

"Government—An Ideal Concept" is written neither for the elite nor for the masses. It is, instead, an attempt to clarify my own personal thinking.

Why, then, is it offered to others? Because of this belief: If one were confined to a wheel chair stationed by a swim-

ming pool and observed a child drowning unnoticed by any of the other nearby adults, there would be a moral obligation to announce the impending disaster. Not to do so would be as immoral as though the person himself had shoved the child into the pool. Similarly in society. If one observes something going on which appears to be destructive, there is a moral duty to proclaim the observation. Failure to do so is as immoral as though the person himself had participated in the destructive action.

There can be added what is at once a selfish and a metaphysical justification for passing on to others what one thinks he understands. Insight, cognition, revelation—call it what you will—is denied to those who withhold what they receive. If one is to gain in thought and consciousness, a precondition is the communication of that which has been revealed.

Having said this much, it is reasonable to assert that one's obligation to others goes no further. Do the best with one's own thinking that one can and make it available! Impose it on others, never! One person has as much right as another to regard his own insight as valid.

Why set forth theories so greatly at odds with current thinking? What chance have they, even though they be correct, of immediate adoption? Herbert Spencer suggested the limit of what one can do and of what one can expect:

It is for each to utter that which he sincerely believes to be true; and, adding his unit of influence to all other units, leave the results to work themselves out.

Mr. Spencer might have concluded his statement as George Washington ended a similar theme: "The event is in the hand of God." How much better the world would

be were each of us to do his best and let it go at that, as contrasted with doing his worst by aggressively imposing himself and his ways on others!

Forecasting in areas where imponderable and little understood forces are at play is a hazardous business. Conceivably, however, an ideal theory of government, at this moment in history, may be utterly impossible of adoption. If this be true, it certainly rests in part on the fact that too many people have, for the time being, *adapted* themselves to governmental interventionism, to a way of life founded on downright viciousness.

Our real hope rests on the working of human forces far more profound and powerful than current adaptations to viciousness. Our real hope rests on (1) the general evolutionary tendency to grow, (2) the will to be free, freedom being the basic condition to any growth, (3) the striving for justice and truth, (4) the love of righteousness, and (5) a reaching for the ideal.

Thinking in terms of the ideal is the first step to moving toward the ideal. The accurate expression to others of one's concept of the ideal is the second step. Not accurately to reflect what one believes to be truth is but another way of making one unworthy of its revelation.

The needed renaissance of this century consists of numerous individuals searching for the ideal and expressing their findings, unattentive to current applause or to popular condemnation. It would be the most *practical* movement that could possibly be gotten under way. The only way to aid a movement is to move to its aid.

L.E.R.

PART I

The Concept Defined

GOVERNMENT IS SAID to be a necessary evil. The saying appears to be without merit. For can anything be at once necessary and evil? True, all governments have had a history of evil-doing, more or less. However, it does not follow from this experience that their good is indistinguishable from their evil. Governments—assuming a proper limitation of their activities—are necessary and not evil. Their evil begins when they step out of bounds. The only necessity is that their evil actions be discontinued. Such an achievement is unlikely until the principles prescribing the boundary lines are searched for and found.

IN A SENSE, this essay is a defense of government—not of government as it exists any place in the world, but of government as one person conceives it ideally. It isn't often that a person deeply concerned with the overextension of government will come to the defense of government in any form. Yet, there is a reason for approaching the subject positively: It is to make the case for limiting the scope of the political establishment.

Why not confine oneself to paring government down to its proper function instead of trying to portray an ideal government? There are two reasons. Foremost is a sobering fact: Government simply cannot be pared down enough in the absence of an understanding of why it should exist in the first place! There isn't any background on which to work. It is as useless as fighting phantoms.

The Positive Approach

No apt analogy of this predicament seems to suggest itself, for in few instances among human institutions is the real justification for existence so vague, so hidden in error, so

shrouded in legal mischief, so little understood as is the case for government. If the reasons for the existence of the church as an institution had never been any better comprehended than is the true purpose of government today, how futile would have been Sarpi's enterprise three and one-half centuries ago in separating the state from the church!* Had the purpose of the church not been recognized, Sarpi would have had to begin his project by showing why there should be a church. Sarpi, the Venetian priest, was more fortunate in his historic undertaking than are those of us who would limit government. We are confronted with the task of demonstrating over and over again why government should exist, in order to point out why and on what basis it should be limited.

Anarchy Is Untenable

THERE is a second reason, and a good one, for a libertarian, even in these days of bloated statism, to defend a legal organization by society. The reason has to do with the ineffectiveness of one's anti-statist allies. For it is an observed fact that numerous students of liberty, particularly those who become extremely devoted to their cause, falsely reason right past properly limited government to the abolition of all formal government—as though limited government were nothing more than a convenient compro-

*"Uncompromising as ever, Father Paul [Sarpi] continued to write letters and publish treatises which clenched more and more firmly into the mind of Venice and of Europe the political doctrine of which he was the apostle,—the doctrine that the State is rightfully independent of the Church,—and throughout the Christian world he was recognized as victor." Andrew Dickson White. *Seven Great Statesmen*. New York, N.Y.: The Century Co., 1915. p. 26.

mise for ideological weak-hearts who have no stomach for the whole truth. In short, some students of liberty arrive at philosophical anarchy and, in so doing, may well lose their effectiveness as libertarians. If this loss in effectiveness were the price of being right, then no just person could complain. But some of us, at least, hold that the loss is for the sake of a position that is untenable.

It will be the contention of this essay that the principles which point to the proper limitation of government are the very same principles which justify government; that for one not to understand the latter is for one not clearly to see the former. It would follow, then, that effective argument for limiting government must rest on knowing why government should be instituted.

An Inaccurate Term

THERE are, though, reasons for regretting that we in America ever adopted the word "government." We borrowed an old-world term with all its connotations of "to govern," "to rule," in an overriding sense. Government with the aim of directing, controlling, steering is not what we really intended. We didn't mean that our agency of common defense should "govern" us any more than we intend the factory guard to be the company's general manager.

Actually, in spite of the original intent, government in the old-world sense is what we now have. Our federal agency and many of the state, district, and community agencies have far exceeded the bounds of protecting the life and property of all citizens equally, and invoking a common justice under law. They do far more than merely

suppress and penalize fraud, violence, misrepresentation, and predatory practices. Today our federal agency and many of the others are the citizens' general managers—and autocratic ones at that!*

It is not government as general manager of America's citizenry that is here defended. Rather, the aim is to present and defend an agency of limited scope, not unlike what the Founding Fathers originally intended—except for the slavery and tariff features, they being infractions or compromises of the original intentions.

No Ideal Theory

As an introduction to this subject, my personal belief is that our original concepts about government grew out of a desire to protect ourselves from observed political evils rather than from the dictates of any well-defined theory. It is an oversimplification to put it this way, but it is my belief that our Founding Fathers had observed in the Old World that those governments which were the biggest and the most inclusive in their scope were the most tyrannical. They concluded from these observations that "That government is best which governs least." In any event, is there in the recordings of the Constitutional Convention, or in other papers and books of the time, a principled, spelled-out, ideal theory of government or liberty?† One

*There are some 120,000 governmental units in the United States.

†This is not to deny that we adopted many excellent organizational principles: republican form of government, division of powers, a system of checks and balances, and many others. These were, however, for the purpose of effecting limitation. Lacking was a well-defined theory or positive rationale as to *why* limitation.

reasonable proof that no such theory exists is the fact that we never see it called into play today by those who are concerned about government's being out of hand.

Two Defenses

AN ideal theory of government and liberty is important. The lack of such a theory is disastrous. In the case of our own country, it is proving disastrous. As long as there were alive those who had learned from experience about tyrannical government, we in the United States were successful in keeping government limited. Succeeding generations were more and more remote to that experience. There came a time, perhaps around the turn of this century, when all connection with the experience was lost. Lacking an ideal theory, we had nothing anchoring us to limitation. Experience was lost. No theory existed. Today there is no more limitation on government than that which political expediency dictates. The advocates of unlimited government are at work.

We have only two possible defenses against their advances. One is to let them succeed and for us, the people, to become experienced again. In time we will revolt against tyranny as we did before. But generations, perhaps centuries, are involved. The other defense is to frame an ideal philosophy of limitation. There is no short cut except the spelling-out and acceptance of a theory of government which is consistent with liberty. If it is right that society should evolve a formal organization to protect its members, and if it is right that the scope of this organization should

be limited, there is, if we will but find it, a theory on which proper limitation can be imposed and maintained.

It is difficult to see how anything can reverse the present trend toward all-out statism except a properly prepared and presented theory of government and liberty. That this essay presents the ideal theory adequately is not claimed. But perhaps these views as to the requirements of such a theory will stimulate others to try their hands; and, if so, this argument will have served its purpose. Like it or not, we are now at the mercy of our own reasoning. Empiricism—trial and error—cannot serve us in the way it did our forefathers.

Examining The Basis For Government

GOVERNMENT would not exist, nor would there be any reason for its existence, if men did not have problems with one another. Therefore, to determine why we should have government and to find out how much of it we should have, we must first form judgments on (a) what aspects of man are social, (b) what aspects are individual, and then (c) by analyzing the nature of organized force (the distinctive feature of government) decide on the extent to which force should be employed in man's relationship with man.

There can be no denying the assertion that man is a social as well as an individualistic being. Both the social and the individual aspects of our own lives are emphasized to us daily. These emphases are presented so numerous and in so many forms—indeed, so confusingly—that it is with difficulty we can tell one from the other. Some

folks are so impressed with the social emphases that they see nothing individualistic about man, and others are so impressed with the individualistic emphases that they see nothing social about man. The former are likely to conclude as socialists; the latter, as anarchists—both being types of authoritarianism.

Man cannot live alone. This is meant, not as a figurative, but as a literal expression. Remove from any one of us all the rest of mankind, past and present, and no one of us could exist. We are an interdependent breed of creation. The writer of this essay, for instance, does not know how to raise the food he eats, to build the home in which he lives, to make the car he drives, to create the opportunities that are constantly presented to him, to write most of the books he reads, to get from the earth the gas that keeps him warm. Relative to the advantages that are his, he knows next to nothing. Alone he is impotent to the point of nonexistence. The same thing can reasonably be said about others.

Each Is Different

THE individual does not exist as an isolated person or, at the very least, as the person he is, except by virtue of his cultural and social heritage. Deprived of the cumulative knowledge and experience of the race, man would be but another variety of curious animal—if indeed he would have being! This accumulation of knowledge, habit, custom, convention, tradition is man's inherited energy, his natural environment—it is *there* for the individual to avail himself of it.

Yet society is an abstraction. It is but a handy generalization. Only individuals count. Each individual is vastly different from all others.* No two think alike, have the same aptitudes and skills, see alike, hear alike, have the same tastes or the same energies.

It is these variations among us and the exchange of our variable talents—be they manifested in goods, services, ideas, insight, knowledge—which account for our being alive. If, for example, everyone else were identical to any single person, all mankind would perish. No one could live, any more than that person could live alone. No one could have any more than he knows how to create. On that, neither he nor the rest of us could live.

Some will argue that if others were not performing the services and making the goods this person requires to live, he would be doing these things for himself. True, each of us has some elasticity in this respect, and in some of us it is quite great; but, by and large, the 160,000,000 American people exist in their present relatively advanced state by reason of their variable talents and the unprecedented exchange thereof.

Results Of Inhibitions

THE above claim—highly relevant to this thesis—needs some explanation. Observe, for example, the Mayan Indians at Todos Santos or at Chichicastanango, or aborigines elsewhere, and note the few, if any, who evolve to—

*For a remarkable and scientific dramatization of human variability, see *Free and Unequal: The Biological Basis of Individual Liberty* by Roger John Williams (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1953).

ward those aptitudes peculiar to each.* By reason of inhibitory influences, they remain for their lifetimes in primitive, similar activity. Rarely does one of them break from this tradition and become a musician, a painter, an engineer, a surgeon, an architect, a builder. Or, reflect on the American Indians who had another low form of cooperant society—a foraging economy. The whole area of these 48 states never supported more than a million of them.† As has been since proven, the limit of the population and its standard of living were in no way due to any lack of natural resources. Nor were these conditions caused by the absence of fertile soils and friendly climates, or by the Indians' inability to breed. Limits to population and the standard of living were due to inhibitory influences which prevented the potential variability in each Indian from manifesting itself. And without any marked variation, there was no marked exchange. Without variation and exchange, there could be no substantial quantitative growth; nor could there be qualitative growth—material, spiritual, intellectual. Stability in the sense of fixedness follows the absence of variation and exchange.

Our Dependence On Interdependence

INHIBITORY influences, broadly speaking, are of two types. There are the sociological influences, the kind man imposes on other men. There are the psychological influences,

*For a factual account of Mayan Indian religious beliefs, without interpretations as to their inhibitive nature, see *Two Crosses of Todos Santos* by Maud Oakes (New York, N. Y.: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1951).

†We have only “guesstimates” on the Indian population. Most authorities would consider a million far too high. Perhaps 200,000 would be as good a guess.

the kind man imposes on himself or, more accurately, from which he fails to free himself. These latter are traditional pulls—man not shaking off his more primitive background—superstitions, fears, rationalizations of laziness, taboos, and so on. For instance, the religion of many aborigines teaches that good or bad crops, ill or good health, hang on the caprice of so-called gods such as high mountain tops; that getting along in life is not a responsibility of self but rather depends on making supplications to the numerous idols.

Consider what has happened in our own homeland. If we were to collapse time into manageable proportions, reducing the life of this planet from its three to five billion years to one year, we would observe in the last two seconds 160,000,000 people living in relative luxury where less than 1,000,000 had lived before—if indeed we would, today, refer to it as living.

To summarize this phase of the argument: There are at least 159,000,000 of us in this country who exist by reason of a phenomenon that has taken place in these last two seconds! The chances are at least 159 to 1 that any one of us is in existence, is experiencing life, by reason of this phenomenon; that only 1 out of every 160 could endure the near self-containment of a foraging economy. This is another way of saying that more than 99½ per cent of us are the offspring of a division-of-labor and exchange society, are dependent upon it, and have a vested interest as profound as life itself in its continuance and perfection. It is also another way of saying that most of us are a highly interdependent type of being and are dependent on the smooth working of the interdependence processes.

Interdependence Is Good

THIS condition of interdependence is something of which to be proud, rather than something to be deplored. It is a mark of progress. It is a forward step in the infinite evolutionary process, for man's purpose on earth is to come as near as possible in his lifetime to the attainment of those creative aptitudes peculiarly his own. Going in this direction, the principle which guides variability will cause each man to become progressively different from other men. More and more will each refine his own unique capacities.* And more and more will each of us need to rely on the products of the energies of other unique individuals. Progress in specialization requires one important warning. It is that we specialists not lose our perspective; that we not lose sight of the forest for the trees; that we not become so immersed in our specialties that we become blind to the process on which our specialization depends. Education in the humanities must go hand in hand with our specialized education.

Energy And The Exchange Problem

THE problem posed by an advanced division-of-labor society is one of energy exchanges. Human energy is one of

*Specialization has been referred to as "analysis run riot." This dim view of an expanding division of labor would be warranted were there no possible synthesis of the human variabilities. But there is a synthesis, potentially a perfect one. It is simply free communication and exchange. Its numberless, daily ramifications can never be envisioned, let alone comprehended, by any man or set of men. This synthesis, however, has the virtue of requiring no more understanding than an awareness to leave it alone except, of course, to protect it against crookedness, violence, and "management."

the numberless forms of radiant energy, seemingly electrical in origin. The late Robert A. Millikan, renowned physicist and Nobel Prize winner for his measurement of the electrical charge of the electron, has this to say:

“All light or other short wave-length radiations are caused by changes in positions of electrons within atoms. All atoms are built up out of definite numbers of positive and negative electrons. All chemical forces are due to the attractions of positive for negative electrons. All elastic forces are due to the attractions and repulsions of electrons. In a word, *matter itself is electrical in origin.*”*

The late Renee von Eulenburg-Wiener, biochemist, most helpfully puts scientific theories about radiant energy into lay language (*italics supplied*):

“Constant change is a characteristic of the living organism and *all physiological phenomena are energy exchanges.*”**

“Every substance is a system of molecules in motion and every molecule is a system of oscillating atoms and every atom is a system of positive and negative electricity.”†

“*Molecules are possessed of kinetic energy, that is, the energy of motion.*”‡

“The atoms, the ultimate constituents of matter, are systems of positive and negative electricity. Electricity

**Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1943, Vol. VIII, p. 340.

**Renee von Eulenburg-Wiener. *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*. New York, N. Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1938, p. 114.

†*Ibid.*, p. 118.

‡*Ibid.*, p. 47.

is a form of radiant energy and atoms may be described in terms of energy.”*

“Of all living creatures, man alone has learned to free energy by conscious efforts. Machines, explosives, the utilization of water and wind to create power, all these are examples of man’s conscious utilization of potential energy. The food man ingests is derived from the stores of energy built by plant and animal. He utilizes this energy in the maintenance of his body, in work and in play *and in the processes of intelligence and creative activity*. It is by these latter processes that he may transform energy to a higher level, so to speak, *and thereby may partake in creative evolution*.”**

“... the individual organism is but a device for the building up of radiant energy into its higher forms as manifested in thought and consciousness. *It is a product of the universal energy and yet a means for its further evolution*.”†

Human Energy Is Diverse

HUMAN energy, obviously, has its earthly configuration only in individuals. Human energy manifests itself qualitatively and quantitatively, psychologically and physiologically, and in numberless forms: thought, consciousness, memory, cognition, ability, physical strength, moral courage, spiritual insight—or, in the workaday world, in the kind it takes to run a typewriter, to acquire know-how, to

*Ibid., p. 117.

**Ibid., p. 133.

†Ibid., p. 447.

bake bread; to drive a truck, to grow wheat, to be a catalytic agent in cooperative effort, ad infinitum.*

The reader may get the idea that the above is a deviation from this thesis on government. Quite the contrary! It is but the preface to the idea that an ideal theory of government and liberty is to be derived from the necessity for the free, uninhibited flow of all *creative* human energy.

Required, however, is more reflection on the nature of energy. There is *potential* energy and *kinetic* energy. A dammed-up pool of water is an example of potential energy. If the obstacle or inhibitory influence, the dam, is removed, the water will flow—the flowing water being an example of kinetic energy. Kinetic energy is energy in motion. It is potential energy gone to work. In the case of hydraulics, there is a natural law, *the law of gravitation*, which attends to potential energy's becoming kinetic energy once obstacles are removed.

Kinetic Energy

EACH individual has numerous types of potential energy—for instance, it may be the type it takes to fashion sand into wearing apparel or the type it takes to hybridize corn. Assume only two Eskimos and only two goods, clothing and food. One can fabricate only clothing; the other can

*To think of energy only as the kind that can be manufactured from coal or other inorganic matter will miss the point in my use of the term. A rereading of the quotes from the scientists Millikan and Eulenburg-Wiener will convey the meaning I give to "energy" throughout this essay. If this wide scope given to "energy" is beyond the reader's comprehension—something to stand in awe of, something beyond human knowledge and beyond the power of human authority and dictation—then I have established the kind of a definition I wish to make.

raise only food. If there are no inhibitory influences standing in the way, the potential energy of each which manifested itself as kinetic energy in the making of clothes and in the raising of food will continue as kinetic, productive, creative energy. They will exchange. The natural law attending to this is *the will to live*. If they do not permit their energies to flow, to remain fluid, to continue as kinetic energy, both will die. One will starve. The other will freeze.

Energy In Motion

It is of the utmost importance to realize that production in its broader and really significant sense—productive activity—is energy in motion, that is, it is energy in constant movement and complex exchange. Thinking of productive activity as taking place only up to the point of an automobile coming off the assembly line is as erroneous as thinking of exchange as taking place only when the automobile is sold for cash. The incontestable statement appearing later in this essay that no man on earth knows how to make an automobile is proof in itself that the manufacturing phase is a series of human energy exchanges. Indeed, these exchanges during manufacture are so complex and numerous that they cannot be comprehended by the mind of man. To stop these energy exchanges at any point, before or after manufacture, is to stop productive activity. Imagine, if possible, the absolute cessation of all trading in the American market. All prior exchanges, such as those involved in manufacturing, would also cease. Unless the moral, political, and business leaders among a people grasp the significance of energy exchanges flowing through space

and time, it cannot be correctly claimed that the problem of production is either understood or solved.*

We are living in a world of 2,500,000,000 people. The potential energy of this population is of unimaginable proportions. Aptitudes and skills of people differ—some slightly at variance as in the case of aborigines, others vastly at variance as in the case of more advanced societies.

Remove Inhibitory Influences

THE life and the progress of life—whether of the 160,000,000 in the United States or of the 2,500,000,000 in the world—depend on these static or potential energies becoming kinetic, useful, moving, flowing, dynamic energies. The total potential energies will tend toward becoming kinetic energies with the removal of inhibitory influences. *Little else but the removal of inhibitory influences is required.* The almost unanimous will to live, and perhaps other even more profound forces which we do not at all understand, will attend to potential energies becoming kinetic. We need only to be observant to appreciate the wonders these natural forces produce and to see that their results are as incredible as the phenomena of our own bodies, governed not by conscious directions but by forces which transcend present consciousness—our miraculous autonomic nervous systems, for instance. We need to learn, mostly, how not to injure or inhibit our endowed or natural or God-given creativity. Let this point be re-emphasized: These energy phenomena, whether of the body (heart pulsations, breathing, 180,000,000 new red blood cells per minute, and so on)

*See my account of the nurseryman beginning on page 134, particularly his use of the telephone.

or of society (interpersonal exchanges of goods, services, ideas, insights) cannot be bettered by any human dictatorial system. Experience seems to teach that man's effort in this respect should be confined to increasing personal thought and consciousness and to guarding against everything which would hamper energy exchanges; *otherwise, leave these phenomenal, miraculous processes alone!* Their creative detail cannot, at this stage of evolution, be understood by man; and by no means can this detail be constructively managed by man. Personally we can behave—and societally we can organize—in ways harmonious to these natural currents of creative human energy. Man cannot, without loss, take over or control them.

Unless one is aware of our dependence—yes, our existence—on flowing energy, this theory about ideal government and its relationship to liberty may not be grasped. Therefore, let's try to dramatize the point by several generalized examples in which human energy is assumed to, and unquestionably does, behave in ways not unlike electrical energy.*

Absence Of Energy

FIRST, imagine 160,000,000 dead persons arranged in a huge circle, their hands clasped to a conduit capable of transmitting every conceivable type of physical and human energy. No energy would be put into the conduit by the dead persons. None could, therefore, be withdrawn.

*The following attempt at explanation has proved clarifying to some but not at all to others. At any rate, these are not written as far-fetched examples. In principle, they are analogous to real life.

Second, imagine 160,000,000 live persons, similarly arranged, but with every one of them having a type of energy precisely like your own. Nothing but your type of energy could go into the conduit. Nothing but your type of energy could be withdrawn. There would be no variation. All would perish, as you would perish were you alone in the world.*

Third, imagine 160,000,000 live persons, similarly arranged, but with the variation of their energies being no greater and no more perfected than the energies of the American Indians. Only the low energies incidental to a foraging economy would go into the conduit. Only the energies that went in could be withdrawn. All but one million of the total population would perish, for the same reason that the American Indians numbered no more than 1,000,000.

Flowing Energy

FOURTH, imagine 160,000,000 live persons, similarly arranged, having precisely the great variance of energies that the population of America has today. Imagine all of their many energies freely flowing into the conduit and any American being able to withdraw any of the input energies according to his own choosing, based on an equitable and voluntary exchange of his own energy. In such an arrangement, for example, the highly specialized type of energy

*By "alone in the world" I mean absolutely alone—that is, completely without what has been bestowed on others, present or past. Human energy, if unobstructed, flows in time, all time. Most of what any of us, and all of what most of us, possess—materially, intellectually, spiritually—is founded on cognition extending into the infinite past. Or, should we call it all "the eternal now"? See *Living Time* by Maurice Nicoll (London, England: Vincent Stuart Publishers, Ltd., 1952).

required to compute mathematical formulas for releasing the power of the atom could be exchanged for the types of energy required to build houses, provide food, write books, make autos, furnish heat, and so on. In short, were all energies permitted to flow freely, any individual in this vast population would have readily available for exchange any one or more of millions of types of energy.

Diverted Energy

FIFTH, imagine 160,000,000 live persons, as above, but with an effective control to keep everyone's energy from going into the conduit. All would perish as if each were alone for, indeed, each would be alone, absolutely alone! There could be no exchange, nothing but one's own energy.

SIXTH, imagine 160,000,000 live persons arranged in a huge circle, their hands clasped to a conduit capable of transmitting every conceivable type of physical and human energy, but with 40,000,000 of them organized for parasitical purposes, using aggressive force or threats of aggressive force to draw off energy in the amount of their demands as distinguished from value-for-value exchanges.* To the extent that they succeeded in drawing off more energy than could be obtained by willing exchange, to that extent would the other 120,000,000 be compelled to accept less in exchange for their energies, that is, these others would have less livelihood by reason of the organized leeching.

As a final example, let us imagine 160,000,000 persons

*See my *Two Ways To Stop Strikes* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953. pp. 9-10).

arranged in a huge circle. There is no master conduit equally available to everyone. Instead, there is one person standing in the center with all the individual conduits from the whole multitude attached to this single person. All energies must be directed to this person. Only he can dispense that which he has received. Here we have the dictator arrangement, applied totally. There would be, so to speak, 159,999,999 volts that could find passage only through a conduit of one-volt capacity. All of the 160,000,000, including the person in the center, would perish. Parenthetically, there are no political instances of 100 per cent dictatorship. Even in Russia the principle of authoritarianism is but little applied. There are vast leakages of free, human energy. Were there no free, human energy, all Russians would perish.*

Life Demands Differences

It can be deduced from the foregoing that no person, logically, should wish others to be like himself. Each individual has a vested interest in all others being different; in their variability; and in the excellence, the advancement, and the success of their creative specializations. Each person, like all others, is so specialized himself that his life depends on this variability, specialization, and exchange.

*It is important to realize that authoritarianism—aggressive force, destructive energy—has an evil effect vastly out of proportion to its quantity. Imagine a church social of 100 people. Imagine the total energy expended by these folks in preparing the meal, walking, talking, gesticulating, and so on. Now imagine an infinitesimal part of this total energy, say 1/10,000th of it, turned into aggressive force—for instance, a deacon poking the minister in the nose! Contemplate the havoc wrought, and the point is clear.

In energy types and in exchange requirements, we are all dissimilar. However, we have one common similarity, and one common necessity if we are to live and progress. It is that prohibitions against, or restrictions upon, the release and exchange of our creative energies be at the lowest minimum possible; that man not keep men from developing their variabilities and from exchanging the product thereof. Again, this removal of inhibitory influences—the kind imposed by man on men—serves to benefit all of us in common.*

Personal Inhibitions

INHIBITORY influences of the psychological kind—one's ignorance, fears, superstitions—are personal and not social, are one's own and not society's, are between oneself and one's God and not between oneself and other men. This is true even of those situations where one man yields to the persuasions of another and consents to be the other's pli-

*The voluntary exchange of the varying products of men's energies is appropriately called the market. If man were not inclined to better his circumstances—that is, to satisfy his needs and pursue his ends with what he regards as minimum effort—he would not be led into specialization. As specialization cannot occur without the market, it is a basic human institution. It is the foundation stone of society. If the presence of the market did not better, but worsened, man's circumstances, no feeling of comradeship (for which the socialists claim so much) would attend to exchange. There would be no market, no society, no man. Man has a natural and a worthy urge to economize his efforts in producing the satisfactions of his desires. It is this urge that leads to specialization and exchange, to the division of labor and the market. However, this is the same urge that, on occasion, causes some men to sabotage the market, to indulge in predatory practices. Stealing, in a sense, is the first and, certainly, the worst labor-saving device. Hence, a fundamental need—if specialization and the market are to exist—is protection against market marauders.

ant tool. The man who submits, if he does so willingly, has created a problem located only where *he* can get at it—in his own will.

Other men may regret another's plight, may rue another's lack of attainment and culture. But each person is faced with the problem of his own creative emergence, progress, development. This is the individualistic side of the problem. The individual is the only one who can attend to the degree and the perfection of his own variability. Others cannot, in a creative sense, do anything *to* him. If they would help, they must limit themselves to what they can do *for* him. *For* him, they can do little beyond attending to their own emergence—materially, intellectually, spiritually.* They can, by precept and example, set a standard to which he can repair. They can have goods and services to exchange, or knowledge and insight to offer. But whether or not he takes advantage of their offerings is a matter for his own election. No one else can decide. The creative side of man has to do with the individualistic aspect of man and must be so treated if damage by man to man is to be avoided.

Unwilling Exchange

MAN, however, does not in every instance confine himself to his creative emergence, to getting ahead by his own competence and superiority. Failing in self-improve-

*This, of course, does not rule out charity of a type which aids another person to help himself rather than to destroy his potentialities by making him dependent. But before even charity can be extended, the giver must have provided himself with resources to give over and beyond his own needs and commitments.

ment and not satisfied with what he can obtain in willing exchange, he will, on numerous occasions, resort to unwilling exchange. He will draw energy from the kinetic conduit without exchanging an equivalent of his own energy. He will tap the power line, so to speak. All unwilling exchanges are examples of this: the thief who "exchanges" your horse for his own low-grade satisfaction, or the voters who legally take other people's income to augment their own.

Variability and its perfection—that is, the creation of the infinite kinds of human energy—originate with individuals. While each individual in his own upgrading draws on other persons, present and past, as well as on his own gift of insight, this process of individual upgrading classifies as voluntary and cooperative. It builds only upon free will and volition. It is the inspired experience of the inner self. While each of us has a personal stake in everybody else's upgrading, the upgrading is not, by virtue of this unanimity of concern, a social problem. It is not a social problem for two reasons: First, it cannot be dealt with through social instruments. Second, the emergence of creative energy is a personal matter, inhering in individuals as they act personally and as they choose to act with other individuals.

Society's Problem

AN attempt has been made in the above paragraph to establish the point that the potential energy of each variable individual is a personal and not a social problem. Earlier it was suggested that these infinite variations of potential human energy will translate into kinetic energy if unin-

hibited—that is, willing exchange will naturally take place if unobstructed, the will to live attending to this. It is now appropriate to discuss the obstructions or inhibitory influences, the actions of man which impair the source of creative energy and stifle its exchange, and also the actions which are parasitic on the flowing energy.

These last-mentioned actions present the social problem, the only social problem there is. All else is in the realm of the creative, the individualistic. Coping with the obstructions to the creation and flow of human energy and the siphoning off of the flowing energy without value for value is a social problem because:

1. These inhibitory actions inflict penalties on all human beings, presenting an in-common defense problem.
2. They cannot properly be dealt with personally.
3. They can be dealt with, in justice, only by social control.

All Are Related

THE first point requires little in the way of appreciation except an awareness that variable human energy, to be useful to mankind, has to be dynamic, kinetic, flowing—as indeed does any other kind of energy—and an understanding that in a free market there is no person too remote to one's self to be unrelated. Recently, I observed a disheveled old lady hanging around a Central American wharf. "How possibly could she be related to me?" thought I. Imagination supplied an answer: Perhaps she gathers the kelp that wraps the fish that feeds the hombre who loads

the bananas which provide the dessert for the woman who cares for the man who runs the nursery that supplies the spruce from which the pulp is made for the manufacture of the cleansing tissue that takes the place of the less sanitary and more costly handkerchiefs we have been using. Who else wants to harvest kelp to wrap that banana-loading hombre's fish? In the free market, every creative act, regardless of how lowly, is related to the kinetic conduit—is capable of giving energy to it and of taking other types of energy from it. An obstruction of any creative energy exchange, regardless of how minute it may be, inflicts a penalty against the potential wealth—material, intellectual, or spiritual—of all other persons. It is a penalty inflicted in common.

Not A Personal Problem

THE second point is that these inhibitory influences against energy exchanges cannot properly be dealt with by each individual for himself. Generally speaking, these inhibitory influences are fraud, violence, misrepresentation, and predatory practices. All are immoral, be they done legally or illegally. The problem here is to remove inhibitory actions. This can be accomplished by restraining aggressive force or by penalizing those persons who indulge in it. This is not an appropriate undertaking for each individual to do for himself, and for the following reasons:

1. It would be wholly impractical. No individual could possibly police the numberless instances of aggressive force—among tens of millions of people—harmful to him and to others, actions he would

have no way of knowing about and practiced by persons most of whom would be beyond his acquaintance.

2. If every person were to be a law unto himself, we would have no less than 160,000,000 governments in America—the “law” of each varying daily with individual caprice.
3. No individual has the moral right to use aggressive force against any other individual. He has the moral right to use only defensive or repellent force. This is a distinction too subtle for noncodification.*
4. The offenders or marauders in society would soon be in command. They would be the government.
5. If the contention is correct that the removal of inhibitory influences is an in-common defense problem, then it follows that anything less than in-common or societal control of the problem is a form of authoritarianism.

Justice In Organization

THE third point is that these inhibitory influences can be dealt with, in justice, only by social organization.

The right-to-life concept and its acceptance must serve as the premise for this point. If a person has a right to life, it follows that he has a right to protect and to sustain that life, the sustenance of life being nothing more nor less than the fruits of one's labor—one's honestly acquired property. The right to life without the right to protect and to sustain

*By noncodification is meant the absence of socially or publicly formulated rules, the absence of law.

life is meaningless. As suggested earlier, it is impossible in a division-of-labor economy to sustain life on one's own specialty. Energy exchanges are as vital as one's own produce. Therefore, the right to the fruits of one's own labor involves the restraint or the removal of obstacles to exchange—not merely the obstacles to one's own exchange, but the obstacles to other people's exchange within any given society.

Equal Rights

JUSTICE compels one other admission. If one has a right to life and livelihood, every other person has a similar right.* One must assume that life and livelihood are just as dear to every other person as to oneself—regardless of race, creed, color, occupational level, or wealth status. *The universality of the will to live and the requirement that life and livelihood be protected are conterminous with society.* The responsibility for society-wide protection cannot, in sound organizational practice, be vested in anything less than society. And where the responsibility rests, there also should rest the authority to discharge the responsibility.†

*Recommended is *The Source of Rights* by Frank Chodorov (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., 1954).

†When individuals, admittedly having the right to defend their own lives, delegate their defensive responsibilities to society's agency, the agency is in full and exclusive charge of that function. In practice, the agency should redelegate the right to defend life as an individual act in certain instances. However, it is the agency that is in control of this function, specifying when and under what conditions individual defense is permissible. Society, however, at all times, should retain the power to employ and disemploy its agency.

It is quite likely that this argument will appear valid only to those who grasp the interrelationship of energy exchanges; who become aware of the extent to which we are interdependent, or more precisely, dependent on these exchanges; who see the meaning of kinetic, flowing, dynamic human energy; and who acknowledge that, in this respect, we are all in one vast energy circuit which encompasses everybody.

What is everybody's problem is nobody's problem—a good adage in this instance. The argument here is that keeping the energy circuits open is not the responsibility of any one person nor of any division of any given society, but is everybody's or society's problem.

To Recapitulate

BEFORE going further, let's condense the central ideas of this thesis:

1. The source of all creative and variable human energy, in an earthly sense, rests in individuals. The emergence of the creative and variable capacities of each is itself a creative process that can only be attended to by the creative unit, the individual, in such voluntary and cooperative actions as he may freely choose to take. This is the province of the individual and not of society. This is the vast, unlimited area of liberty, of self-reliance, and of self-discipline.
2. Creative, variable energies will tend naturally to exchange to the benefit and life-extension of all in the absence of man-concocted obstacles. Obstacles

to creative energy and its exchange—be they in the form of fraud, misrepresentation, violence, or predatory practices—adversely effect and subtract from life and from the potential life (emergence) of everyone and are, therefore, the problem of every human being *equally* within any given society. While the removal of social obstacles is the problem of everyone, it is not the responsibility of any one person. It is the responsibility of all—that is, it is a social responsibility. As man in America today is the product and has life by reason of division of labor and exchange, so does he inherit with birth this interdependent, social aspect of self. This is as much his inheritance as is the responsibility for his own emergence. The restraint and the penalizing of the obstacles to creative energy and energy exchange—not merely between oneself and another, but between all men—must be dealt with by social prohibitions, by the law! This is the relatively small, limited province of what we have come to call “government.” It is the appropriate area of disciplines exterior to personal disciplines.

If the purpose of man on earth is self-realization—coming as near as possible to the attainment of those creative aptitudes and potentialities peculiarly his—it follows that the law, the book of rules and prohibitions for social administration, can logically serve only the purpose of deterring man’s destructive actions for the sake of giving full flower to his creative actions. The law (social rules) can have no just object beyond removing social obstacles to the release of the human spirit. An organized arm of so-

ciety, within its proper bounds, can be but the handmaiden of liberty; government, within its proper bounds, can be but the protective servant of all individuals equally against antisocial marauders.

According to the theories here set forth, individuals should delegate to society's agency the responsibility for protecting all members of society against such destructive actions as some of its members may bring against others of its membership.

Society, per se, cannot assume responsibility, for society is an abstraction. Society can be given entity only as it is organized, only as its members are organized.

Purpose Of Organization

ORGANIZATION is for the purpose of cooperation. There can be cooperation for creative purposes and cooperation for repellent or defensive purposes.*

Cooperation for creative purposes must be left to voluntary action. Men can cooperate to use force, but they cannot be forced to cooperate. Voluntary cooperative actions occur daily in numberless ways, most of them having almost imperceptible organization but some of them having highly formalized organization — corporations, partnerships, educational institutions, and so on.

However, cooperation for creative purposes requires, as

*Just as kinetic energy can be destructive as well as productive or creative, just so can cooperation be for destructive purposes. For example, a gang of thieves can cooperate to rob a bank or a gang of voters can cooperate to take the property of some to "aid" others. This kind of voter cooperation is based on perverting government, inducing government to use aggressive force instead of confining itself to defensive force. In this stage of the essay, I prefer to discuss government ideally.

an auxiliary, cooperation to annul destructive purposes. Cooperation for creative purposes requires that inhibitory influences against creative action be neutralized. In good theory, it is as members of society—not as members of a family or of a corporation or of a labor union or of a chamber of commerce or of any group having special interests—that individuals organize themselves into a police force to cooperate in maximizing their liberty by restraining those who would impede creative effort and exchange.

Nature Of Political Agency

WE must recognize the nature of society's political apparatus. It has, ideally, the single, distinguishing virtue of being able to inhibit, repel, restrain, penalize. All personnel of the apparatus can do everything else better outside the apparatus than in it. What should be inhibited, restrained, penalized? Those actions of man which are characterized by aggressive force, namely, those actions which themselves inhibit, restrain, destroy, or penalize creative effort. Defensive force may be used to neutralize aggressive force, and such a use of force serves a social end. This use of defensive force should be the guiding principle of the political agency.

It is society that should organize the political apparatus—the state, the government, the agency of common defense. It is not proper that anything less than society should organize to impose restrictions which relate to all members of society equally. By the same token, it is not proper to organize society for creative effort, for creative aptitudes have their locus only in individuals. For example,

it is absurd to organize society into an agency of aggressive force, as has been done in Russia, to make automobiles, to produce penicillin, or to run a chick hatchery. Interests and aptitudes for these creative specializations—governed by the principle of variability implicit in any and all progressive, evolving societies—are rarities and not generalizations. The rarities for creative effort find cooperation possible only by people voluntarily organizing themselves.* The benefits flowing from these voluntary organizations are available society-wide. But these benefits are available to all only because the organizations are voluntary. *Energy flows in the absence of obstacles sufficient to stop it.* That energies are often wasted and misdirected by persons in voluntary action is only to admit that man errs.

Russia Is No Exception

It is often argued that the Russians can, for example, produce airplanes by their use of aggressive force and that the production of an airplane is a creative project. It is! Admittedly, this thesis contends that force can be used only to inhibit, repel, restrain, penalize. Is there not a contradiction here? No! The Russian airplanes—creations—are actually the product of voluntary, cooperative effort. And it is not the force that creates the airplanes. Force in Russia, as elsewhere, inhibits, repels, restrains, penalizes. Russians, in addition to defensive force, use vast amounts of aggressive force which destroys. In Russia the force is used

*Voluntary organizations (creative energies in cooperation) form in accord with complex human affinities that defy diagnosis, accurate prediction, and single-minded arrangement. The point is illustrated in the latter part of this essay.

to destroy a worker's opportunities to pursue the vocation of his own choice. The worker in the airplane factory is denied the opportunity of being an artist, a cook, a musician, or whatever. Left to him, shall we say, are only two alternatives—building airplanes or dying. If he prefers the former to the latter and acts in accord with his preference, he has made a choice to produce airplanes. The fact that his alternatives are thus limited by the employment of force does not alter his act of voluntarily choosing between the two. Nor does it alter the fact that all of his acts in producing airplanes, whether in inventing or doing, are voluntary acts. A person cannot be compelled to act creatively.* But the areas where he would choose to act creatively can be ruled out of existence by the use of force.

Choice Increases Efficiency

WHEN force is used, as in Russia, to limit opportunities, thus leaving open one or a few areas for creative effort, we ob-

*One critic of this reasoning suggests that slaves were compelled to and did act creatively. Slaves merely adapted themselves to their environment, their confinement, their limitation of choices. Within this framework, their creative acts were all voluntary acts. Many human beings have submitted to floggings or have gone to their deaths because they chose these punishments in preference to the limitation of choices imposed upon them. This insistence of mine is not hair-splitting. That every creative act is a voluntary act is a basic point in understanding the limitations of force. Perhaps this will help my critic: Put the two of us in a room barren of all else but a lively fly. I command my critic to catch the fly. But to give the theory here advanced an honest test, he is to make not a single move except as I direct it. The fly will not be caught. The fly can be caught only if my critic acts in response to his own free will and volition. This acting in response to volition applies to the picking of cotton or to the building of airplanes as well as to catching a fly.

serve many persons building airplanes when their best aptitudes are for painting, for cooking, for music, or something else. In a free-market society, where force would have to be limited to restraining social obstacles to creative energy and its exchange, we would find mostly those with aptitudes for airplanes building airplanes.

Obviously, an individual is more creative in an activity agreeable to his aptitudes than in an activity disagreeable to his aptitudes. A person knows his own aptitudes better than does a stranger—the dictator or any possible henchman. This is a primary fact of observation. It follows, then, that total energy will be higher among a people individually choosing their own work than among a people whose work is dictated for them by another individual.

The same principle applies to exchange. We will fare better—materially, intellectually, spiritually—if each of us chooses what he will communicate and exchange with others than if some other individual dictates what each shall communicate and exchange. It is these differences in the handling of creative energy and its exchange that account for the differences between Americans and Russians in production, invention, personal emergence, and so forth. The Russians apply aggressive force to creative activities and claim it to be good. Americans are now doing the same thing on a smaller but growing scale. Many of us, however, claim it to be bad, as does this thesis.

Unanimity Requires Common Interest

COOPERATION is required among members of society to perform the negative function of prohibiting obstacles to pro-

duction, communication, and exchange. The cooperation ought to be as nearly unanimous as possible. Cooperation can approach unanimity only if the activities of the defensive agency be limited to those actions which have a common benefit to creative effort. Ideally, the only dissenters would be those who want to live by predation. If the agency of defense finds itself being used as an agency of plunder (aggressive force)—as in the case of our government today—cooperation will not tend toward unanimity. For in this instance, some of the members of society cooperate to benefit themselves at the expense of the other members, employing the agency to achieve their ends. The plundered members find it difficult to cooperate with the plundering members.

Mere participation in the activities of society's agency, such as unwilling military service or the unwilling payment of income to support the agency in overextended activities, does not qualify as cooperation. Cooperation in its highest form is a willing response, not the choice of the lesser of two evils. Willing response, approaching unanimity, is much to be desired. *But it is impossible except as society's agency is itself an accurate response to man's single in-common social requirement: defense against those actions of man which inhibit creative energy and its exchange.* Man is a member of society in common with all other men in this respect only. His social agency, to be useful and not harmful, must limit itself to this one small but extremely important function which all men have socially in common. Then reason and justice, at least, will supply the basis for unanimous cooperation.

Limitation Of Government Prescribed By Its Justification

LET the above ideas be emphasized in these terms: Any logical and just organization by society derives its existence from only one source: the common need for every man to protect himself against those who would limit his creative opportunities. Every human being is born with as much right to live his life creatively as any other man. Man, however, is incapable of protecting his life as a personal, individual project, and at the same time of realizing his human potential. That part of his inheritance which designates him as a product of society precludes this. By reason of this social circumstance, he is committed, in principle, to cooperating with his fellow men in the protective project of "one for all and all for one"; in a project that should make no distinction whatever as to persons; in a project where all ought to be regarded as equal; in a project where special privilege should be unknown.*

The principle which justifies society's organization of a defensive arm—man's inheritance as an interdependent being—also prescribes the limitations on what the organization should do. In short, the law's limitation inheres in its justification.

Force is a dangerous thing. Therefore, society's organized arm is a dangerous instrument. It is not, as some assert, a necessary evil. When limited to its proper defensive scope, it is a positive good. When exceeding its proper limi-

*It cannot be too much emphasized that human beings are not equal. Yet, we should all be equal before the law in the sense that we think of ourselves as equal before God.

tations and becoming aggression, it is not a "necessary" but a positive evil.

Two Types Of Force

FORCE of the kind here discussed is of two types. There is repellent or defensive force. There is aggressive force. The latter is always evil. There are no exceptions. No man has any moral right to use aggressive force against any other man. Nor have any number of men, in or out of societal organizations, any moral right to use it. One of the most distressing fallacies having to do with government and liberty is the assumption that the state, an agency presumably of the people, has rights beyond those possessed by the people. For example, the state uses aggressive force against an individual, compelling him to exchange some of his income for the alleged prosperity of Tennessee Valley residents. No reasonable person would sanction such an aggressive action on the part of any single citizen. Therefore, no reasonable person can logically believe that any such control belongs to a multitude of citizens. From what source does this extracurricular "right" of the state to use aggressive force derive? It has no derivation. It is an arrogation. This arrogation is as untenable as the divine right of kings theory; indeed, it is the same thing with the divine excuse omitted.

Any person has the natural and moral right to use repellent or defensive force against any other person who would aggress against him. No person on this earth has any moral right of control over any other person superior to the defense of his own life and livelihood. Two persons

banding together do not acquire moral rights of control over others superior to the rights held by each before their association. No increase in the number of individuals involved morally alters this in any way—even when the number reaches the 160,000,000 of this nation. Rights not possessed by individuals cannot properly be delegated to an agency, political or otherwise. Society's agency, then, will find the proper limits of its scope in exercising for everyone, without favor to any, the natural and moral rights inherent in its members.*

Tool Of Liberty

THE above concludes what is little more than a bare outline—a skeleton, so to speak—of the ideas that need to be considered in arriving at the principles and the theories of government and liberty. Government—which no doubt is what we will continue to call our organized agency of society, even though it be limited to defensive functions—is, if properly employed, an essential tool of liberty.

Government organized strictly in accord with right principle is an object more to be ardently hoped for than seriously expected. Yet, right principle must be deduced and have some measure of understanding if political expediency, controlled as it is by demagoguery and special interests, is not to rule and eventually overcome us. Political expediency feeds on the destructiveness it breeds. Every evil it evokes sets in motion other “compensating” evils. Political

*An excellent development of this idea is to be found in *The Law* by Frederic Bastiat (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1950).

expediency, by its very nature, inevitably leads to a dead end.

Right principle is man's only compass. He often deviates from the course it suggests, but at least he can be aware of where he is by reference to it. Right principle is a beacon by which man can reverse himself after he has ventured into the evil ways which constantly beckon him.*

Right principle as relating to the limitation of government is deducible. Protecting the release of creative human energy and its exchange is suggested as the basis for sound deductions.

*What is right will, of course, always remain debatable as between persons. The nearest anyone can come to practicing right is accurately to follow that which his conscience dictates as right. "Right principle," therefore, as I use it is obviously and necessarily right principle as I see it.



PART II

The Concept Argued

IT IS INCORRECT to think of liberty as synonymous with unrestrained action. Liberty does not and cannot include any action, regardless of sponsorship, which lessens the liberty of a single human being. To argue contrarily is to claim that liberty can be composed of liberty negations, patently absurd. Unrestraint carried to the point of impairing the liberty of others is the exercise of license, not liberty. To minimize the exercise of license is to maximize the area of liberty. Ideally, government would restrain license, not indulge in it; make it difficult, not easy; disgraceful, not popular. A government that does otherwise is licentious, not liberal.



From The General To The Particular

NOW, LET US ASSUME that someone has succeeded in setting forth the principles which should guide men in prescribing the scope of their organized social agency. That would be a great, forward step. Yet, before much value could come from such an accomplishment, a most important, secondary step would be required. The argument would then have to proceed from the general to the particular; in short, the principle would have to be related to daily affairs. Many rules of right conduct are popularly paid lip service—Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not covet; and so forth. Yet these same rules are not only broken but also are rarely thought to be applicable when a number of persons become involved.

Is it any wonder that the federation of our states and the Constitution which prescribed and limited the scope of the federation required one of history's greatest intellectual selling campaigns? It is doubtful whether anything ever equaled *The Federalist* in this respect.*

The ideas in this thesis are revolutionary today, although not as much so as were similar ideas in early America when contrasted with the doctrines of the Old World. We, at least, have some history of liberty to serve us. Lip service—even if no longer founded on deep beliefs—is still paid to “free enterprise” and to limited government.

But revolutionary ideas are revolutionary regardless of

*The task today is selling the idea of less government. The task of Hamilton, Jay, and Madison was to sell the idea that there would not be too much government. The Bill of Rights was required to make the sale to the people.

historical precedence. And today, as in the 1780's, explanations and reassurances, in quality and conviction not unlike the excellent works of Madison, Jay, and Hamilton, will have to appear. For few among us, softened as we are by "success" and by the doctrines of police-action "welfare," can imagine how we could prosper short of the state's interventions in our creative activities.

How To Stop Thinking

THIS growing belief in the use of aggressive police action as a means to direct the creative activities of a people in society, and the consequent and corresponding loss in the belief that free men can direct their own creative activities, are understandable. The reason is this: When the state preempts any activity—that is, makes of it a state monopoly, such as carrying the mails—citizens cease their thinking on how the activity could be carried on as a private venture. Why waste time thinking about the impossible? With this absence of ideas as to how an affair could be conducted privately, there soon follows the belief that the activity cannot be conducted unless the state conducts it.

If, for example, the federal government had decreed at its inception that all boys and girls should be provided with shoes and stockings from birth to adulthood, and the practice of this subsidy had been going on for the last 165 years, one who challenged it today would be asked: "Oh! So you favor forcing boys and girls to go barefooted in the winter?" In this instance, we have experience to show the fallacy of any such practice. Boys and girls in America, where shoes and stockings have been accepted as family

responsibility and where freedom from aggressive state action has been greater than in other countries, are better shod than are other boys and girls.

Explanations And Receptivity Required

AGAIN, the ideas and principles as herein set forth, if ever they are to have significant application, will require not only explanations of a high order but an almost unparalleled desire on the part of many to understand them. The questions these revolutionary ideas raise will have to be answered, their humanitarianism demonstrated, their promise of a general well-being set forth in convincing terms, and fears alleviated as pertaining to the removal of state responsibility for citizen welfare. And the great bulk of these explanations will depend on imagination grounded in a faith in what man can accomplish in action free of organized aggression. The explanations will have to be made in the extremely difficult realm of what Professor Ludwig von Mises refers to as "discursive reasoning," and certainly many persons will not welcome the explanations. Ideas at odds with the status quo are seldom popular. As suggested earlier, empiricism cannot serve us as well as it did our Founding Fathers. Many of us cannot reflect on the evils of tyranny as did the founders of this country looking at the Old World. The tyranny of bloated statism is not across the water and behind us. A majority of us are in it here, are a part of it, and most of us feel we have a vested interest in its maintenance. We can't see the forest of evil as clearly as they did. We are, with but few exceptions, the evil trees and, for the most part, are unaware of

doing anything wrong. Further, we are not, in this growing stage of our national, legalized parasitism, "feeling any pain." The American society, the host—the world's greatest example of self-reliance, of released human action, and of energy stored in everything from man-planted forests, to productive facilities, to know-how—is not yet showing any easily discernible signs of being "down and out."

The following, like the foregoing attempt to suggest an ideal theory of government, is intended only as an outline—a skeleton, so to speak—of answers to the questions which these theories assuredly will raise. Many persons of superior skills and abilities will need to lend their help to this task. Here, however, are a few of the subjects that need explanation.

Is Tax Collection Aggression?

ONE of the first, important, and assuredly controversial points the foregoing theories will raise has to do with taxation. It has been argued that aggressive force is evil in all instances; that neither man nor government has any moral right to employ other than repellent or defensive force against any person or persons. Does not the forcible collection of a tax qualify as aggressive force? Does it make any difference if the tax be for the limited government herein defended or for a government organized to engage in legal plunder? Isn't it aggression in one instance as well as the other? Can anyone who believes in strict governmental limitation, as does the author of this essay, logically support other than voluntary contributions as a means of financing the limited government for which he argues?

Few libertarians would entertain any doubts about the adequacy of voluntary contributions as the means of supporting limited government in the U.S.A. The annual requirement would annually be oversubscribed. However, even holding to this belief, there are good reasons for not favoring this method of financing. In 1942 the United States Supreme Court said in one of its decisions: "It is hardly lack of due process for the government to regulate that which it subsidizes."* This appears to be a sound statement. But, if the shoe were on the other foot, would not the voluntary contributors to government financing soon be regulating that which they subsidize? Indeed, would not the control of society's agency soon be in the hands of those among the citizenry who had fared well financially? Would this be a proper way to distinguish who should control the government? The argument has been advanced that there should be no distinctions at all between individuals so far as society's organized arm is concerned; that every individual in every way should be equal before the law; that a person is indistinguishable from any other person in the eyes of a just agency of all the people.

However, the faults with voluntary financing of government are not the really valid reason for favoring taxation, or for contending that taxation does not classify as aggression against the liberty of citizens.

Roots Into The Past

As stated earlier in this thesis, every one of us exists by reason of a division of creative energy and its exchange. If

*Wickard v. Filburn, 317 U.S. 111, p. 131, October, 1942.

there were no division of labor, none of us would be alive. If there were division of labor and no exchange, none of us would be alive. The number of persons who can live at any given material, intellectual, or spiritual level is determined by the degree of perfection of this energy equation. Also, the state of this energy equation determines the number and richness of opportunities for individual variability—potential emergence. In short, while what we do with our creative potentialities is strictly a matter of personal decision, the fact that we are ourselves alive is due to the degree of perfection of the exchange equation which has preceded us.

There are two sides to this coin. True, we inherit not only the benefits but also life itself which division of labor and exchange confer. But, by the same token, we inherit the obligation its maintenance and perfection demand. In this single respect, we are as much members of the society which has been responsible for this as we are individual human beings. This membership in the societal organization that inhibits the social obstacles to creative energy and its exchange is one's own.* That which is one's own isn't anyone else's. And it is not merely one's own for harvesting its blessings; it is one's own to support for precisely the same reason that it is everyone else's to support. One cannot deny his parentage by the simple expedient of saying: "I don't want any parentage." Nor can one deny his societal obligation by the simple expedient of saying: "I now choose

*While government in America has changed its nature—going from a defensive agency to an agency of aggressive force—there is no denying that it has acted defensively in vast areas and has, until lately, observed limitation better than have governments elsewhere. I feel I am obligated only to the agency as it should exist and to some extent as it has existed, not to the agency in its overextended departments. My part in the latter is clearly an unwarranted compulsion and is so regarded.

not to have inherited any obligation." The inherited obligation is a *fait accompli*. To support or not to support a limited organization of society, based on right principle, is logically exterior to the area of free choice, unless, of course, one chooses to absent himself. The libertarian, according to his own principles, must always permit the dissenter to "shop around" for a social organization to suit him. Societies, like clubs and fraternities, could well be in peaceful competition with each other for members.

Shirking Obligations

FOR one not to support that which he has inherited as an obligation is to put the burden on others. Others have a moral right to protect themselves against anyone who would burden their energy, or energy exchanges, against anyone who would siphon off their livelihood. A person who by failure to attend to his own obligation, thereby loading it onto all others, engages in an inhibitive action against the society of which he is a member. He is not returning an equivalent for benefits and services received—this equivalent being an equitable tax. Thus the agency of society must, in justice, collect from him. This collection does not, therefore, classify as aggressive force, but rather as repellent or defensive force.*

*What is an equitable tax to support an agency devoted only to the defense of creative energy and energy exchanges? As I have tried to show later on, life or life energies cannot be taxed equitably. Perhaps it is only by the taxing of livelihood, through a medium of exchange, that equity can be achieved. This would suggest a tax *proportional* to livelihood and is to be distinguished from *progressive* taxation, which is, in fact, a form of aggressive confiscation. For an interesting analysis of the problem, see *Liberty and Taxes* by Bradford B. Smith (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1947).

Some opponents of any organization by society refer to government as "slavery" and to taxation as "robbery." These epithets appear not to be correct. When society's agency goes beyond its authentic function of defending all of society's members equally and without favor and is employed as an agency of plunder to "help" some members at the expense of other members, then and only then can the actions of the agency be called slavery. Likewise, plundering the honest fruits of one's labor for the "benefit" of others classifies as robbery—legal, perhaps, but robbery nonetheless.

Adherence to the principles of limited government as herein set forth need not be offensive to any person except, perhaps, to those who have come to believe in the communistic doctrine that the state's function is to serve as a social leveler. And the obligatory payment of its costs should not be offensive to any person except, perhaps, to those who believe in no government at all. For this is but the assumption of the responsibility for one's own welfare. Such responsibility is to be as much prized as one's rights. Obligations have the same relation to benefits as responsibilities have to rights.

The idea that there can be rights and benefits without corresponding responsibilities and obligations is an absurdity. Indeed, rights and benefits are but the fruits of accepted and discharged responsibilities and obligations. Therefore, if rights and benefits are prized, it follows that their sources ought to be even more cherished. This is by way of saying that one should have as great a regard for his inherited obligation to support a

properly limited government as for the benefits he derives therefrom.

Persons Their Own Rulers

AMERICAN history emphasizes the meaning of an acceptance of obligations for self. For instance, there was nothing mysterious or miraculous about our unprecedented American experience. Previously, political talk and debate had been about how government could more effectively rule the people. Many of the old-world philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Hegel, Rousseau, and others—thought in these terms.

Here, though, we introduced a revolutionary idea: The purpose of government is not to rule! Government has only the limited function of serving the sovereign people as a defensive agent! The people shall be their own rulers in a creative sense. Government, a division-of-labor project itself—the citizens assigning certain specified tasks of their own to an agency—shall only cope with those who would hinder the citizens in their creative performance. Government, therefore, operating in response to this kind of reasoning, was so limited that it could no more serve as a source of succor than could a beggar. There was no legal agency for plundering, for taking from some and giving to others. Self-reliance—the acceptance of an obligation for one's own welfare—flowered as a consequence. The acceptance of obligations begets creative activity. The resulting toughness of spirit, the conviction that one is responsible for oneself and for one's own emergence, together with the

energy stored in numberless kinds of productive facilities, stand as our main bulwark against today's plundering assaults.

Taxation for government founded on the defensive principle is an inherited obligation. It is not an aggressive act for some members of society to keep other members of society from unloading their burdens onto them. It is a defensive act. Further, acceptance of one's just obligations is not a hindrance to self-emergence but actually is a positive asset.

Conscription

THE approval of the idea that the formal agency of society should collect an equitable tax from its members and the contention that the collection is not an aggressive but a defensive act will suggest to many persons that the agency can, with equal propriety, compel or draft its members for military service. On the contrary, no ideal agency of society can conscript any of its members for any kind of employment.

There is no need to discuss the superiority of volunteers over draftees for military service. Nor is it germane to this argument to explain why armed action, even for defense, should never precede a large-scale voluntary willingness to participate in the action. Suffice it to say that there never will be safeguards against war if a people can be committed to a war by a few persons—that is, if a people can be committed to a war short of a general willingness to risk, not someone else's, but one's own life and fortune.

Obligations And Rights

THE distinction between collecting taxes and compelling military service inheres in the difference between types of obligations and rights. As previously contended, one does have an obligation to society which justifies the payment and the collection, if necessary, of an equitable tax. The societal agency, in collecting the tax, is merely performing its proper role of defending its members against those who would unload their own obligations onto the shoulders of others. Bear in mind that the collection is in livelihood, not life.

However, no person has an obligation, other than to himself, to live. He may, and sometimes does, choose not to live—all suicides being examples. A person is not obligated to society in this respect. To live or not to live is an affair of individual choice. It is a matter between man and his God, not between man and society.

A person does not have an *obligation* to society to live. He has only the *right* to live if he so chooses.* No societal organization would be justified among a people who had no desire to live. An organized arm of society is founded on and is justified exclusively by *the will to live* which exists in a people—precisely the same law of nature which

*This is an extremely difficult point for me to "think through." A person has the right to live but has no obligation to society to do so. Yet, I have contended that a person has an obligation to support his and others' defense of life. As I see it, the obligation to pay for an agency of common defense is imposed on those who choose to take advantage of their right to life. There is no such obligation, obviously, on those who choose not to live.

attends to potential human energy's becoming kinetic human energy—that is, which attends to communication and exchange among men.

Source Of Delegated Powers

THE will to live is general insofar as this essay's calculations are concerned. There is no need to equate in society's current problems the nonliving or those who do not want to live. The general will to live is related to our basic assumption that each person has a right to live, that is, he has a right to his life and his livelihood—"certain unalienable Rights." The attempt has been made to demonstrate that these rights cannot properly be attended to as individual projects; that propriety and justice demand that they be delegated to a societal agency for attention.

The societal agency can then, if ideally constructed, be in possession of only delegated powers. These do not exceed the rights of the delegants. The staff of the societal agency has the responsibility for common defense, invoking an impersonal justice, and keeping the records incidental thereto. The staff does not have any moral right to employ aggressive force against any person within or without the society for the simple reason that the members of the society have no such rights to delegate. To compel a citizen to give of his life for the common defense is not a defensive but an aggressive act for the reason that no citizen has an obligation to society to live.

We in America observe these principles when we refuse to use conscription in the ordinary staffing of our societal

agencies. We do not conscript our mayors, our governors, our presidents, our policemen, our recorders. We rely upon the free market for obtaining this type of service, precisely as we rely upon the free market for obtaining many other goods and services. The free market, be it understood, has many other and often more powerful inducements than material consideration.*

Conscription Is Aggression

It is when we get into the extraordinary staffing of the societal agencies that we have trouble with these principles. When the domestic marauders have added to them a sufficient number of foreign marauders, we unwisely forsake free-market or voluntary principles and frantically resort to authoritarian principles.

We seemingly conclude that volunteers for defense are inadequate and that conscription is the only means of adequate staffing—forgetting that whenever citizens fail to volunteer in significant numbers, the military action in question cannot qualify as a defensive action. If an adequate number of military personnel cannot be obtained short of conscription, and if conscription is used to obtain the adequate number, the act of con-

*In peacetime it is such things as money, the preference for certain types of work, the belief that government provides secure employment, the competition in winning elections or appointments, the satisfactions that some have in being an official, and the urge to do one's part which serve as incentives or inducements adequately to staff the societal agency. In wartime, if free-market principles are to continue, other incentives become more pronounced, for instance, the urge to defend one's family and homeland regardless of the risk to life.

scription itself is prima-facie evidence that the armed action in question is an aggressive action.*

Where there is the will to live, where life is prized and considered worth living, there also will be found the will to defend life. While it may be true that the specialists in armed defense—the hired staff of society—will recognize the need for defense before the citizens recognize the need, the specialists have, initially, only the obligation to advise the citizens and to await the citizens' decisions and orders. For the specialists to do otherwise—that is, to commit the citizens to armed action and then to impose conscription—is not only to aggress against the “enemy” but is also to aggress against the citizens.†

All societies are based on some degree of division of labor and exchange. The more advanced the societies, the more variable are the members thereof—that is, the greater are the differences in persons. As this variability becomes more pronounced, so does the need increase for a means of gauging the market value of all efforts. This can be accomplished only by an honest medium of exchange, or its equivalent as established by a free market.

With this in mind, it becomes evident that society's organized arm cannot tax esoteric thinking from an esoteric thinker or inventions from an inventor or managerial know-how from an entrepreneur. The tax has to be in the form of

*See *Conscription* by Daniel Webster and *Wars and Conscription* by Dean Russell (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953).

†It does not necessarily follow that all voluntary armed action is defensive action. History is filled with instances of voluntary aggression and brigandage.

a common denominator expression of value, usually money. An organized agency of society can "collect" money only in the sense that it insists on all members of society discharging their societal obligations in order that some will not have to bear the burden of others.

The ideal societal agency, organized only for the defense of creative energy and its exchange, cannot with justice go beyond this. It cannot, while adhering to sound principle, tax or conscript or collect persons, their aptitudes, their potentialities, their lives. These latter qualities, if they are to be contributed to the societal agency, will have to be volunteered. As was pointed out earlier, man can cooperate to use force but cannot be forced to cooperate. Defending one's life, family, property, and homeland is very often the supreme in cooperative effort.

World Government

NEXT in importance among the questions these theories raise is: Do not the admissions that man has a social aspect to his life, that each man has in some degree a relationship to all other men over the whole earth, and that it is the function of government to defend all life and livelihood, warrant world government, or, at least, a government of "the free nations"? If government is designed to defend persons, is it not logical to look to a supergovernment to defend nations?

This idea of world government became popular in the United States shortly after the termination of World War II. But the arguments against it, when considering the necessity of including the current enemy—Russia and her

satellites—proved too much. For instance, the U.S.A., with more than one-fifth of the world's earned income and less than one-sixteenth of the world's population, could easily be voted into what Americans would regard as poverty. Forming a government of "good" nations and "bad" nations had too many obvious flaws. But the devotees of supergovernment, while amending their geographical sights, continue to advocate an international layer of government—Atlantic Union or whatever—a government made up of just the "free" or "good" nations.

The definition of a free or a good nation apparently is predicated on the nation's opposition to the Russian brand of communism. In the popular view, there isn't anything wrong with communizing the product of all by compulsion, providing it is accomplished by "free elections," or indeed by any method not strictly the Moscow type. Tito's Yugoslavia, avowedly as communistic as Russia, is "good" only because Tito prefers his own brand of communizing to the Politburo's. Peron, who resembles a Hitler or a Mussolini politically and ideologically, would no doubt be our "ally" if he would but take a "proper" international stance—that is, if he would throw his power the "right" way.

No Free Nations

WE might as well face it. All the talk about free or good nations derives solely from the grammar of power politics. There is not today a single free nation in the world—if by free one means the absence of aggressive acts on the part of government; if by free one means that any citizen is

free to engage in creative effort and exchange the product thereof with whomever he pleases.

American popularity for some new kind of supergovernment is grounded, without question, in the very best of motives. If it can be argued with logic—and it can be—that proper government would maximize liberty by restraining marauders among persons, why is it not just as logical to argue that proper supergovernment would maximize peace by restraining the marauders among nations? Peace, of course, is a worthy object. Most devotees of supergovernment are also devotees of free trade—a worthy object if there ever was one. Here in America, with the federation of our states, we developed the greatest free trade area in the world. Would not free trade be correspondingly extended were we to federate the nations?

Let Limited Government Concepts Be Extended

So far, the principal object of this essay has been to demonstrate that there is a sound and potentially practical basis for limiting government—that is, for limiting the activities in which government can properly engage. This can be accomplished, so this argument goes, by learning to distinguish between aggressive force and repellent or defensive force, and by learning to distinguish between creative and destructive energy. Government must limit itself to the employment of repellent or defensive force against destructive energy. Government can never properly use aggressive force, nor can it ever use any kind of force against creative energy or its exchange. Employing these

criteria, it is possible to distinguish with a near-precision the actions to which government should be limited.

The projection of the above ideas across ever broader areas of the earth is sound in every respect, just as sound as local or regional government and just as desirable. However, without the penetration of limited government concepts, world government cannot help but multiply the world's present governmental absurdities. Government today, everywhere, is conceived in varying degrees of authoritarianism, which is political error. Increasing the scale of the error will not erase the evil thereof. We are plagued with governmental overextension. More of the same will only put the task of correction further beyond the reach of possibility.

Working for world government or for Atlantic Union is not the way to achieve sound government on any international scale. To achieve this end, work must be directed toward the widening and acceptance of the limited government concept.

It probably is an exaggeration to assert that as many as 1,000,000 American citizens are supporters of strictly limited government. As a consequence, our own governmental structures are out of hand. Earl Browder, erstwhile head of the Communist party in America, had this to say on behalf of the opponents of limited government: "State capitalism leaped forward to a new high point in America in the decade 1939-49. . . . State capitalism, in substance if not in formal aspects, has progressed farther in America than in Great Britain under the Labor Government, despite its nationalization of certain industries, which is a formal stage not yet reached in America; the actual, sub-

stantial concentration of the guiding reins of national economy in governmental hands is probably on a higher level in the U.S.A.”*

Without belaboring the point further, many of us in the United States do not today hold the beliefs that make possible the limitation of our own several governments. We have a major project of our own to undertake before we can remedy the rest of the world. And, without question, the most powerful influence for good we could exert on the peoples of other nations would be establishing an exemplary house of our own.

Responsiveness Of Local Government

It is a primary fact of observation that error in government is most easily corrected where the governmental unit is local and small and where the officials are acquainted with the citizens who employ them; that the correction of error becomes progressively more difficult as the unit of government is extended and as the officials are more removed from the citizens who employ them. We need no more verification of this than to observe the relative ease of correcting the maladministration of the local police force as distinguished from the relative difficulties of correcting maladministration at the federal level. And little imagination is required to visualize the almost impossible task that would confront us in correcting maladministration at the international level. We have the recent United Nations war as an object lesson.

*Earl Browder. *Keynes, Foster and Marx: State Capitalism & Progress*. Yonkers, N.Y.: Earl Browder, 1950. pp. 29-30.

If these contentions are correct that limited government on a world-wide scale is desirable, and that its attainment depends solely on the extent to which concepts of limited government penetrate the consciousness of (i.e., are understood and accepted by) an ever-widening number of individuals, then it follows that work on behalf of a free world-wide society should be confined, first, to one's own improved concepts and, second, to those who are within one's range of communication.

However, the idea that a federation of nations highly committed to socialistic policies—as all nations are today—can do other than strengthen and spread socialistic policies is patently absurd.

Governments Aren't Governed

THERE is one fact that deserves emphasis when considering this problem. It is that *a government does not police or control the governments which are minor to it*. Different layers of government merely divide the job of governing individuals. One should ask himself, when contemplating any kind of an international government composed of today's socialistic nations, just what additional government it is that he wants from such a source.

Now then, any person who believes that the purpose of government is to rule, to govern, in an overriding sense; who believes that government's proper function is to wield aggressive power over the creative activities of its people; who believes that world peace is a condition that can be secured by a balance of power—that person can logically believe in and give support to world or semi-world gov-

ernment right now. But by the same token, those of us who believe only in strictly limited government should be content to leave well enough alone and not to make bigger a power device that is already dangerously menacing us.

Natural Boundaries

SOCIETIES, like the individuals who compose them, are highly variable. They tend to have more or less natural boundaries. The boundaries are roughly determined by the mores, and by natural geographical, ethnic, and economic boundaries being conterminous.

Governments within the respective frameworks of these highly distinctive societies—each its own government—would seem more conducive to moderation and to citizen control than any conceivable international arrangement that is possible today. Let the people of the Bismarck Archipelago worship their divine monster, the Dukduk, and let them be ruled, if they wish, by their elders who dress as Dukduks.* This isn't a bit worse than other peoples of the "free nations" who look to government in the same slavish and worshipful way—and perhaps it isn't as bad. Nothing is going to change these primitive or modern forms of occultations except an advancement in understanding. Learning begins with oneself. If good enough, it spreads to others.

As to extending free trade among nations, it is precisely as simple as extending trade among persons. Indeed, world free trade is nothing but uninhibited trade among all per-

*See chapter IV, "The Magical Origins of Power," in Bertrand de Jouvenel's book entitled *On Power: Its Nature and the History of Its Growth* (New York, N.Y.: The Viking Press, 1949).

sons on earth. This condition would exist if the various political apparatuses were inhibiting the interferences to trade rather than inhibiting trade itself.

One only has to ask the question: "How do I contribute to people's trading with me?" The answer is clear: Put no obstacles in the way of exchange. All the trade that anyone has a right to demand will take place in the absence of obstacles. Persons exchange. A great motivating force, the will to live, attends to this.

Increasing Trade

GOVERNMENTAL action does not cause exchange. When a government is organized solely for the defense of life and livelihood (there is no existing example of this), that government restrains or destroys inhibitions to trade. When a government is organized for more than this—that is, to rule or to govern—it becomes the means to inhibiting trade. All governments presently erect obstacles to trade: tariffs, exchange controls, embargoes, quotas, and so on.

Unless one wants to argue that this nation become a dictator among nations and compel others to do as we think wise, there is nothing this country can do about extending world trade except to remove our own obstacles to others trading with us. The fact that the U.S.A. itself is an offender against free trade argues that even were we to dictate the world's rules, we wouldn't dictate terms superior to those we dictate for ourselves.

Perhaps the greatest trade fallacy of all is that our own barriers must be removed on a reciprocal basis—in a word,

removed only to the degree that we can induce others to remove theirs. We would be ruined, so the argument goes, were we to let down our own obstacles to willing exchange. Obviously, we couldn't be ruined if no one wanted to trade with us. Equally as obvious is the fact that we wouldn't consider ourselves ruined if we wanted to make the exchange. If one will but think of this problem as a person, the whole myth explodes. Imagine that you offered to everyone on earth the right to bargain with you! Some would, and some wouldn't. However, the more the offer was accepted, the more would you be in a position to prosper.*

Let the idea gain currency that the only function of government is to use repellent or defensive force against those who would restrain or destroy creative energies and their exchange, and we will have limited government on a world scale and probably will be unaware that it exists. We will all be too busy acting creatively.

Depressions

WHAT about "booms and busts"? Wouldn't we be in a boom or a bust most of the time if people could act as they pleased, except for defrauding or otherwise doing violence to others? Aren't the great depressions of the past positive proof that freedom won't work?

A conclusion consistent with this thesis can be stated

*For an extension of the free trade thesis, see *The Tariff Idea* by W. M. Curtiss (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953).

categorically at the outset: Booms and busts have not been caused in any single instance nor to any degree by the release of creative energy and the exchange thereof. On the contrary, they have been caused by perversions of liberty—by aggressive, political interventions in the market place, by government's failure to perform its proper function, and by government's insistence on indulging in improper functions.

Liberty Never Wholly Accepted

LIBERTY, like Christianity, has been tried but never wholly adopted. It isn't that these ways of life have been found wanting. It is that they have been found difficult and rejected by many. The relations between liberty and government as outlined in this essay have been practiced only partially. To the extent that government takes sides among the citizens—plundering some for the "benefit" of others, granting special privileges—to that extent has government become incapable of performing its legitimate function of protecting the life and livelihood of all citizens equally. It is a self-evident fact that no person or agency can protect the honest fruits of one's labor while at the same time forcibly taking the fruits of one's labor. In short, the more government acts aggressively, the less it can act protectively or defensively.

The history of government's acting aggressively coincides with the history of government. Is there a single instance where government has been limited to the defense of creative energy and its uninhibited exchange? Even in America in 1789—the nearest known approach to strict limita-

tion—slavery and tariffs were acknowledged as appropriate aggressive acts of government. The principle of aggression, once admitted, had either to be denied and destroyed or approved and expanded. While Negro slavery was later denied and destroyed, the principle of government aggression was not stamped out. Some of the aggressive seed remained in embryonic stage; and by 1900, governmental actions were taken which led to the development of the embryo.* By 1913 this perverse principle was so thoroughly established that we inscribed on our American banner—proclaimed and adopted as national policy—the Marxian ideal.† This Marxian ideal, the Sixteenth Amendment—the progressive income tax—legalized a new slavery in lieu of the Negro slavery earlier disposed of.

“What is essential to the idea of a slave? We primarily think of him as one who is owned by another. . . . That which fundamentally distinguishes the slave is that he labours under coercion to satisfy another’s desires. . . . What . . . leads us to qualify our conception of the slavery as more or less severe? Evidently the greater or smaller extent to which effort is com-

*A remarkable account of governmental encroachment, how it started, and the manner of its growth was written by John W. Burgess, founder and for many years head of the Department of Political Science at Columbia University. The book, *Recent Changes in American Constitutional Theory* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1923) is out of print but is available in many libraries.

†“In a higher phase of Communist society . . . society [can] inscribe upon its banner: ‘From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!’” Karl Marx, *Capital and Other Writings*. New York, N. Y.: The Modern Library, Inc., 1932. p. 7. The progressive income tax is the application of this ideal by aggression. It legalizes the political practice of communizing the product of all by force. It sanctions social leveling by government.

pulsorily expended for the benefit of another instead of for self-benefit.”*

This new slavery advances in direct proportion to the application of aggression by government. It is not intended in this essay to outline or statistically to verify the tremendous growth in governmental encroachment since 1913. There are many excellent readings on this phase of the problem.† Aggressive intervention by government has a thorough historical record. Booms and busts cannot logically be blamed to the free market and limited government for the simple reason that no such arrangement has ever been more than approached. It has never been wholly practiced.

Unemployment

THE severity of busts or depressions is usually measured by the degree of unemployment or the contraction of business activity. *Unemployment is a phenomenon of the partially rigged market.* A minimum wage law, for instance, that would make illegal the payment of less than \$100 per week

*This is extracted from the chapter, “The Coming Slavery,” in Herbert Spencer’s *The Man Versus the State* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1946).

†The Federal Budget in any one of the last 20 years (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office).

Thomas Barber. *Where We Are At*. New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1950.

Ben Moreell. *To Communism via Majority Vote*. Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1952.

F. A. Harper. *Liberty: A Path to Its Recovery*. Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1949. Chapters 12-13.

for department store workers would throw out of employment all marginal workers—that is, all workers worth less than \$100 per week to the employer. Other economic rigidities—there are literally millions of them in America today—such as \$3.00 per hour for carpenters aggressively established by a labor union, will disemploy carpenters whenever the demand for carpenters at this rate declines.

Full employment exists and always has existed in two types of situations and is assured in a third:

1. Full employment exists in primitive societies—foraging and exclusively agricultural—where division of labor and exchange are minor and where there is no perfection of a societal agency devoted to the protection of creative energy and its exchange. The American Indians did not, and the Mayans do not, have unemployment problems.
2. Full employment exists in slave labor societies, where the government acts aggressively to a high degree. There is no unemployment problem in Russia.
3. It is inconceivable that there could be other than voluntary unemployment in a free-market society were government limited to restraining all inhibitions to creative energy and its exchange, assuming, of course, that government performed this function effectively.

Involuntary unemployment, except for acts of God and total disability cases, originates with man-made obstacles to creative energy and its exchange. Free the market and remove all marauders, and there will be as much work to do as one wants to

do. What one will obtain for the work will be determined by what others will willingly exchange for it.

Purpose Of Statistics

REPORTING on business activity in our argued-for free society would have only one purpose, namely, to aid in economic calculation on the part of participants. Whether the aggregate activity were high or low would be of little more than academic concern. It would only reflect the extent to which citizens wanted or did not want to produce and exchange. Business activity, unlike today, would not be a gauge of how ineffectively economic rigging is working. Nor would it, as today, be the source for exultation or fear. Relatively low business activity would not classify as "bust," any more than an individual's taking the day off would classify as personal failure.

Money

THERE is, though, an extremely important aspect of the bust or boom problem that must engage our attention. It has to do with the medium of exchange.

If we will reflect on the kinetic conduit idea—all types of human energy flowing into the conduit and available to anyone and everyone on a value-for-value exchange basis—we will readily recognize that the flowing current is not and cannot be measured in terms of the many energies themselves. So much esoteric thinking as such is not exchanged for so much wheat as such. In a highly developed

division-of-labor and exchange society, most human energies are and must be translated into a denominator that is common to all energies—in a word, into a common denominator that will serve as the measure of energies. The alternative to this is to use no common measure—a return to barter—which, understandably, has a limited flow potential. The required common denominator, this measure of energies, is appropriately called the medium of exchange—money.

Imperfections in the medium of exchange can destroy an otherwise perfect division-of-labor and exchange economy. These imperfections can and do cause booms and busts. It is of the utmost importance that the subject of money be mastered.

What, however, is the extent of understanding? I have often said, and not too facetiously, that not more than one person understands money and I am unaware of who he is. The reason for this far-from-professional assertion is that among all of the money “experts” of my acquaintance, I do not know of any two who are in agreement. Therefore, there cannot be more than one among my acquaintances who is right; and not being in a position to know with certainty, I have to ask: “Which one is right?”

An Instrument Of Fraud

OH, yes, there are many of us who can write reams in justified criticism of the present money hodgepodge, who readily see the fallacies in monetizing debt, in taking gold off the market, in modern but subtle forms of coin-clipping, in demanding that money serve as a medium of exchange

while at the same time insisting that it serve as a fixed, inflexible depository of value, in money-making by credit. In short, many of us know how money in ignorant manipulation is used and always has been used—more innocently than designedly—as the greatest instrument of fraud ever known to man.

Why, however, cannot someone write the specifications for an efficient medium of exchange that is impregnable to fraud? Why, when confessing to one of the world's acknowledged leaders among economists that I had never been able, even in a simple equation, to figure out an ideal medium of exchange, did he reply: "Neither have I"? Of one thing we can be certain: This distressing situation is not caused by a shortage of thinkers sincerely devoted to finding the right answer.

A False Base?

LET us make a supposition: What if these devoted persons have been basing all of their thinking on a false assumption? In this case, no matter how devotedly or ingeniously or indefatigably they thought, they would come up with wrong answers—all of them! And the false assumption would account for the confusions—any enduring agreement among sincere and reasonably intelligent persons is possible only if their premise is right. Any right conclusion must be founded on a right premise.

Throughout all recorded history, with but minor exceptions, the assumption has been that money matters fall within the province of government. The idea has been but little questioned. The writers of the Constitution, although

not intending the construction that was later given to their wording, gave credence to this assumption. Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution of the United States, delineating the powers of Congress, reads: "To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures." Without question, it is correct to say that nearly all current thought on correcting our money troubles is premised on government as the agency to "coin Money, regulate the Value thereof."

Government should not have anything more to do with money than it has to do with the accuracy of labels on patent medicines! Government's task is to restrain fraud and misrepresentation in one as much as in the other, and its function is no more in one than in the other.

A Cue?

It seems fortuitous that the writers of the Constitution should have included in the same sentence "To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof" and "fix the Standard of Weights and Measures." For by associating these two activities, they impressed us as giving the same validity to one as a function of government as to the other. Based on what they might have meant, they might have been right. But here, perhaps, is a cue to why Americans, having revolutionary ideas about government, by misinterpreting the intended meaning, got off to a wrong start. At first glance, these two functions appear to be identical in principle. Yet, careful reflection reveals a world of difference between the two.

There isn't any reasonable doubt but that the Founding

Fathers regarded government as an agency to defend life and liberty. For, after mentioning "Life, Liberty" in the Declaration of Independence as "unalienable Rights," they hastened to add, "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men. . ."

The writers of the Constitution were true to their objective when prescribing that Congress "fix the Standard of Weights and Measures." It would be impossible to accept the responsibility for restraining and penalizing fraud and misrepresentation, and for adjudicating differences appertaining thereto, unless there be "the Standard." A bushel and a yard had to have definition. Let it be noted, however, that there was no hint here of "coining" the bushels or the yards by government—that is, governmental production of bushels of wheat or yards of cloth. Nor was there any hint that the government should "regulate the Value" of wheat or cloth. All that was done was to set up "the Standard" by which fraud and misrepresentation could be judged, by which justice could be administered.

The Biggest Governmental Error Of All

"To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof" by government, as practically interpreted, missed the whole point of government as an agency to secure "unalienable Rights." Indeed, regulations written under the powers to "fix the Standard of Weights and Measures" would have sufficed. There would, for example, be a need for setting up standards to assay the fineness of gold and silver; for judging whether all citizens' representations as to fineness were accurate; for stamping out all counterfeiting, whether mo-

tivated by fraud or by innocent credit mechanisms; and for stopping any and all means by which media of exchange could be employed to enrich anyone at the expense of others.

“To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof,” as interpreted, put government into the one business which, among all of the government-in-business errors, should have been most studiously avoided. This move put our hired guardians into the production of the purchase orders which have a command over all the goods and services our governmental guardians were hired to protect. In short, it did in fact make rulers out of persons who were intended to be, and who were meant to have been, protectors.

Not all of mankind’s devilry originates with men themselves being devils. Most of the troubles among men are set in motion by ill-advised institutions—that is, by men faultily organizing themselves. If all men were wiser, they would better comprehend the harmony of their interests. Wisdom being but relative and minor, men err in interpreting their true interests and, consequently, suspect a multitude of antagonisms among themselves. They devise institutions for the purpose of cooperating along the lines of their suspicions. Men cooperate to effectuate their unfounded antagonisms, even as they cooperate to effectuate their acknowledged harmonies.

Enemy Or Servant?

GOVERNMENT as an agency of society—if well-conceived, properly limited, and soundly organized—is a cooperative

arm of society. It is but another item in the division of labor. Its true interest lies in protecting the society that created it.

Government is composed of persons, as is society. Organize the persons in government in such a manner that they can readily realize that they will fare ill if the society which hires them disintegrates or that they will fare well if the society prospers, and society will have a good and faithful servant. But organize the persons in government in such a manner that they get the idea that society is only a host to be exploited, and society will have a bad and parasitical servant.

One of the requirements for promoting cooperation between two or more persons—or between society and government—is that their interests in the project in question be recognized as in accord; that the self-interests of all parties be understood by the parties themselves to be in harmony. But let the idea prevail that the self-interest of one is served at the expense of the other, and the two will not cooperate; instead, each will work against the true interest of the other.

Blank Checks

It is bad organization to give government—society's presumed protector of life and property—a blank check on society's livelihood and property. A "blank check" is precisely the right term for government's power as presently interpreted "To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof." This cannot help but reverse the intended relationship and

turn protectors into exploiters. This sort of organization emphasizes the idea that society is only the goose for government's plucking; that government has an interest, not identical to, but at odds with the society it allegedly serves. The history of the last 40 years provides ample evidence to support these views. The many millions on society's growing governmental payroll are highly organized *against* society—cooperating to thwart society in its numerous efforts at redress.

Perhaps this point can be made clearer by posing simple analogies of what we ought to have done and what actually we have done. Visualize a community. The spokesman for the citizens says to an agent whom the citizens have selected:

We believe that each of us has a right to his life and to the honest fruits of his labor. We are all specialists and find that we can prosper if we exchange our specialties. To aid our trading, we have our own medium of exchange and we do our own coining. The tokens we use are soundly based, but these tokens are purchase orders and are accepted in exchange by all of us for all of our goods and services and for all of our properties. It is of the greatest importance, in addition to protecting us against the common variety of marauding from within and without the community, that you protect the sanctity of our medium of exchange. Guard this as you would our lives, for our livelihoods do, indeed, depend on its remaining sound and honest. Set up "the Standard" by which you may judge.

And the following is roughly analogous to what we have said:

We believe that each of us has a right to his life and to the honest fruits of his labor. We are all specialists and find that we can prosper if we exchange our specialties. To aid our trading, we shall need a medium of exchange. The tokens should be exchangeable for any of our goods and services and for any or all of our properties. Now, what we want you to do, in addition to serving as a guardian of our lives, our incomes, and our properties, is to take command of this medium of exchange—in fact, to coin it and to regulate its value. We will be paying you and your establishment in the very coin which you are to produce and to regulate. Don't let any of us cheat each other; but if you find it expedient to enlarge your force, to look after the material welfare of any of us who in your opinion are in need, or to enter into business competition with any of us, you just go ahead and use your own judgment. If you find that your requirements are more than we will vote to you in the form of taxation, it will be quite all right for you to obligate us to indebtedness on your own motion. Indeed, if the political situation seems to require it by reason of our demands being too numerous, it will be all right for you to monetize our debt—that is, you are empowered to coin money, not only on our real wealth but also on our indebtedness. If you spend \$100,000,000 on an aircraft carrier, let us not be \$100,000,000 shy in our own purchase orders. By monetizing debt we can have \$100,000,000 more in purchase orders!

The Servant As Sovereign

THE American revolutionary idea—the people to be sovereign, government to be the hired agent—was, without doubt, the most important political idea in all history. But the pioneers of the idea, the founders and their immediate followers, not unlike their progeny of this generation, bent, gave ground, compromised with what they held to be right principle. After all, these nearest political practitioners to American purism had, to some extent, to be “practical.” So they accepted several “practical” and preposterous courses. Negro slavery was the most obvious. Tariffs “for revenue only” were the least offensive. The most preposterous of all, however, was the perversion of what was, no doubt, a sound idea originally. In the idea’s perverted form, it was held that the people could employ a servant to protect life and property and, at the same time, give that servant complete control over all livelihood and property by giving to him a monopoly of the “coining” of all claims to income and property (money) and, concurrently, the power to “regulate the Value thereof.”

History has already recorded the result.*

What are the precise specifications for a medium of exchange not “coined” and controlled by government? Few if any of us know the precise answers to this question, for the same reason that we do not know the answers to many other questions. There does appear to be one sound con-

*If one wishes to gain an idea of how extensively our own government has intervened, money-wise, in the market place, read *Economics and the Public Welfare* by Benjamin McAlester Anderson (New York, N.Y.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1949).

clusion on the money question: Get government out of it entirely except to police, restrain, inhibit, and penalize all unethical or dishonest practices. As if by magic, men in the market will put the specifications on paper and into practice, including coining, almost overnight. After all, no brains are lost to the money problems by telling the cops that their job is not to own, control, and manage, but rather to police the medium of exchange.

Too Much Government Causes Booms And Busts

THERE is no point at all to government except to organize a staff of persons to act defensively, protectively, against inhibitory influences to creative activity and its exchange. Individuals can act creatively only when acting personally and cooperatively. They cannot act creatively when applying aggressive force of any kind. Erecting an effective, honest medium of exchange calls for creative effort of a high order—this to be found in the market. Because a medium of exchange lends itself to fraud so easily, defensive actions of a high order are called for—these to be found among specialists in uncovering and restraining fraud, among competent civil servants having a delegated power to use repellent force.

Let there be a realignment of our thinking on money. Let the economists and other specialists in exchange media premise their thinking, not on government, but on the idea of folks in the market “coining the money.” The market will do the regulating of value of the goods and services exchanged. And let the folks in government specialize in

detecting, exposing, and repelling any fraudulent practices which may arise in the market. To do this, they need only apply the principles they apply to weights and measures; for instance, fix the number of grains of gold that shall be a dollar.

Booms and busts are caused by government's acting aggressively and managerially in the market and by government's not performing its proper function of restraining violence, fraud, misrepresentation, and predatory practices in the market. Stated another way, booms and busts are the result of government's becoming a predator rather than serving as it should in the restraining of predators.

It is just as absurd to put the blame for busts or depressions on creative energy and its exchange as it is to put the blame for your and someone else's personal hardships on the exchange of your eggs for his potatoes.

More On Aggressive And Defensive Force

It would appear necessary, before challenging some of the more popular—currently, even sacrosanct—activities of government, that the distinctions between aggressive force and repellent or defensive force be made clear and, also, that a method be suggested for one to determine where defensive force is logically in order.

Let us first consider the problem of defensive force and its use. Nearly anyone who reflects on the problem under discussion readily sees the justification for using defensive force to repel a would-be thief or murderer, or to restrain any action that would inhibit creative energy or its exchange. Thievery, murder, suppression of personal emer-

gence, and the barring of energy exchanges are clearly anti-social. Everyone is, to some degree, adversely affected. Society must take some measures against destructive actions of this type. "But," ask critics, "doesn't the ignorance of some bear deleteriously on all? Or a potato blight, to use another example? Should not society use defensive force against these maladies the same as against thievery, for instance?"

Here is one method for distinguishing between the proper and improper uses of defensive force: Take the person with whom one's acquaintance is the most highly developed, namely oneself. First, think of oneself as having only creative powers—the power to learn, to discover, to invent, to think, to produce, to cooperate with others, to express ideas, to exchange on a two-way willing basis with another, and so on. In short, think of oneself as a person wholly devoid of any faculties whatever for physical defense. This is one's creative self.

Next, think of some defensive faculties being added, such as fists backed up with muscle, a policeman's club, a machete, a gun. This is one's defensive self.

A thief enters your home, or a man tries to kill you, or another threatens violence to your family if you continue to work at your job, or still another takes your and others' earnings if you exchange the clothing you make for the food they produce. You will, if given a chance, use persuasion before using your powers of physical force to stop or repel them. But persuasion in this case has the reality of your defensive powers behind it and is, therefore, a part of the defensive paraphernalia.

Stop!

It is important at this point to consider the nature of this force. It is a physical force and if confined to defensive purposes has the power to restrain or to annul that which would destroy. We can be accurate if we think of defensive force simply as a man and his machete. True, a machete can be used creatively to cut down a banana plant or to trim a lawn. That is not the man-machete combination in mind. The one in mind is a man using a machete to stop, to fend off. "Fend off" is the precise term to describe defensive force. Defensive powers can be employed only to fend off or to stop. Penalties justly and legally agreed upon as *ex post facto* impositions are an integral part of the fending-off process.

Now, let us take the case of ignorance, the case of a person adjudged by another to be ignorant. What is there to stop? What can be done about ignorance by using a machete defensively? Nothing! Clearly, one's only way of coping with one's own or anyone else's ignorance is to employ one's creative faculties. The machete is useless. Similarly, with potato blight. Creative, not defensive powers are called for. One must discover or invent a spray or perhaps search for a strain of potato immune to the blight.*

Society, being an abstraction, cannot act defensively or creatively. However, all of the persons in a population can

*If my potatoes had a certain contagious blight and thus threatened other people's potatoes, society would be justified in removing the hazard. But justice would require that society duly compensate me for my loss. This is assuming the blight to be "an act of God" as distinguished from a negligent or a willful act on my part.

organize to form an arm of the population to do certain specific chores for all of the people. But, in justice, all of the people cannot organize to carry out a task that is not of common interest to all. Creative action is highly variable, individualistic and voluntarily cooperative action. In common, is only the fending-off function. In the ideal society, according to this thesis, all of us do, in effect, turn over our fending-off rights—our defensive powers—to an agency of defense. We give this agency a monopolistic control over all fists, all policemen's clubs, all machetes, all guns.

This is quite an agency. It is composed of persons with ambitions for affluence and power not unlike many others of us. And it has a control of all the machetes, so to speak. The political problem posed by such an agency is to limit the use of these machetes to repellent or defensive purposes. There is no known method of limitation except broad understanding of the distinction between defensive and aggressive powers.

From Defense To Aggression Is Simple

THE same machete that can be used to stop an aggressor can be used as an instrument of aggression. The machete is indifferent to its function. How it is used is dependent solely on the judgment of the user. If all persons had delegated all of their machetes to some person for the purpose of defending their lives and livelihood, he would, with this monopoly of physical force, have to exert good judgment not to use the machetes to take life and livelihood. If the person should happen not to have good judgment; and if coupled with this, there were constant and insistent argu-

ments from large sectors of the population that he actually could do good by using the machetes for other than defensive purposes, there is a likelihood that he would do so. The person, perhaps, would use these defensive instruments aggressively. He, the presumed defender against aggression, would himself initiate aggression against others.

How would he do this? Take the case of potato blight. It cannot be cured by the use of defensive force. But the defensive machetes could be put to aggressive uses: the forcible collection of the income of everyone, the proceeds of which would, theoretically, be used to employ persons to act creatively on finding a cure for potato blight. The injustice of such a practice, of course, is manifest. No person possesses any right to impose his judgment on others, even for doing his brand of good. Nor can a person properly delegate to anyone—even to government—rights which he himself does not possess.

Public Housing, An Example Of Aggression

YET, this is the way government acts today in ever so many areas. As this is written, an account is received of the advocacy of a public housing project by two leading citizens of a Midwestern community. They agree that there is no housing shortage. But "there is a slum condition." These gentlemen do not like this condition. Regardless of their dislike of it, however, they would not rob another's safe or granary (use aggressive force) as a means of satisfying their instincts to "do good" to others. Such a thought would be repulsive to them. Nor would members of society forgive them for an act so lacking in respectability.

But something "respectable" is open to them. All they have to do is to agree between themselves (and get some others to join in) that the agency—the policeman having control of all the weapons—will rob my safe or my granary. It is that simple. Nothing in the way of personal accomplishment on the part of the two Midwesterners is required. The most stupid of people are capable of indulging in such action. And the two gentlemen who don't like the "slum condition" will "do good" by the mere act of deciding that the policeman will take property *without the owner's consent* to serve *their* purpose.* The act is legal and is "respectable" for the same reason it is legal—it has popular approval.

This "respectable" act is more evil than outright, dis-respectable robbery! The common thief, at least, would take some risks in approaching another's safe or granary. He, like the highly acclaimed Robin Hood, would give one the sporting chance of stopping him, a chance greatly minimized by the do-gooder's political procedure.†

Let's analyze these "slum" do-gooders as typical of a

*The taking of one's property without consent is a good rule for determining when aggression is applied. There are two observations to keep in mind, however. The first applies to the collection of taxes to finance society's agency limited to defensive functions, and for the reasons earlier outlined. The second has to do with eminent domain. The acquisition of property as a means of removing obstacles to creative energy and its exchange would appear to be consistent with a tax to pay for defense. Just compensation is, of course, assumed.

†Robin Hood, a figment of fiction, has always been and remains popular. His popularity derives from his robbing the rich to aid the poor. If the rich he robbed came by their fortunes fairly, Robin was a brigand of the first order. If, on the other hand, the rich were robbers themselves, then Robin was nothing but a show-off. If he had been intelligent and seriously interested in those he purported to help, he would have contributed his skills to stopping the robbers in the first place.

cross section of many adult citizens. There are things they want to see done. There is help they want to render unto others. The idea of any such achievements with their own ingenuity or to aid their fellow men with their own goods, appears too slow, too difficult, and often impossible. The institutions of voluntary cooperation and of personal charity are, for them, outmoded. For they are, in fact, "progressive." They wish to progress faster than their own mentalities or their own means permit. They want to realize their ideal of Utopia during their own lifetimes, and in using government to act aggressively they seemingly have found the means to achieve their ends.

The means are simple enough and, like the first doses of an opiate, are without any pain. They will resort to the aggressive power, the governmental agency, and instruct it to take just a little, "a mere pittance," of everybody's property in the nation. Presto! The slum area is rebuilt. They can actually see it. It can be photographed, and contrasting pictures of what was and what is are put in the papers for all to witness. It is their "accomplishment." And they experience the lovely feeling of having done a solid good.

Parasitism And Viciousness Endorsed

WHAT these do-gooders fail to see, perhaps because the damages of their mischief cannot be cartoonized or photographed, is the effect of 160,000,000 "mere pittances" taken from all the people without the people's consent. If their legal robbery were to be the only robbery of the year, it could be borne as any robust tree withstands a minor parasite. But, by their action, they endorse the principle of

parasitism. They stand sponsor for every plunderbund in the nation, numberless extorted "pittances," even extortions that fail to qualify as "good" by their own inconsistent standards. The sponsor of government slum clearance cannot logically or consistently oppose rent control, farm subsidies, or RFC loans to a failing business, any more than the sponsor of TVA can logically or consistently oppose the proposed St. Lawrence Seaway. They are all members of the nation's legal despoilers by the mere act of engaging in only minor spoliation.* *They are advocates of a way of life based on downright viciousness, for their way of life is impossible without the use of aggressive force.*

That Which Is Not Seen

WHAT these aggressive or vicious do-gooders fail to see are the uses 160,000,000 of us would make of the fruits of our labors were these fruits not taken from us. Perhaps we would do a little charity in our own neighborhood, anonymously, without any publicity or praise. Maybe we would create jobs for some persons that would permit them to repair their own "slum" conditions. It isn't unthinkable that we might use this income, were it not taken from us, to release ourselves from the confinements of subsistent liv-

*Aside from members of the Moscow apparatus who are bent on the utter destruction of capitalism, it is next to impossible to find an avowed socialist who is in favor of all the socialistic items being practiced in America today. Our grand total of socialism results from different groups wanting only their own item of socialism. The man who argues for "free enterprise" except a protective tariff on his own commodity is a case in point. Socialism in America is the aggregate of a lot of minor socialistic advocacies.

ing. As a consequence, we would have a better opportunity to develop our own potentialities and, incidentally, to become better generators of energy, thus increasing what others could obtain in exchange for their own energies. All of us—160,000,000 varieties of us, acting in accord with our 160,000,000 differing judgments, developing our lives as we interpret ourselves—add up to quite a creative force. Conceivably, all of us might do better with the fruits of our respective labors and creative powers than the two Midwestern do-gooders can do with them. We would do better unless it is true that these two have a greater creative energy than the aggregate creative energy of all the rest of us. If their energy is only average, and probably it isn't more than that, then why should we try to put 159,999,998 "volts" through their circuit which will transmit only two "volts"? Throttle down our energies in this manner, obstruct our creative impulses to act on our own, not only in housing, but also with respect to other creative ideas and goods; and we will be stopped—period!

These do-gooders are the initiators of obstacles to creative energy and its exchange. They keep us from becoming our potential selves. They take away our sustenance which is but the extension of our lives. They, in this action, differ from Robin Hood only in that they are less direct. In principle there is no distinction whatsoever. Both actions add up to the same thing—the aggressive taking of property (livelihood) without consent—viciousness. Whether the action is given the unattractive label of "legal thievery" or the attractive label of "social welfare" is of small comfort to the persons from whom property or livelihood is taken.

These do-gooders, in this action, differ from Malenkov only in that they are less competent. Malenkov uses the aggressive power more efficiently to force others to conform to his will than they use the aggressive power to force others to bend to their wills. Malenkov needs only to utter a command; they have to organize a gang of voters. In principle, these do-gooders aim to substitute their wills for yours and mine.* True, they are only penny-ante dictators. But they are so numerous! How fortunate all of us would be if we had only the obvious to cope with—a Robin Hood for instance!

The Fate Of Aggressors

THE next aspect of this subject about which some questions ought to be raised has to do with the persons who invoke and the ones who wield the aggressive power; those who insist on the use of aggressive force and the persons in government who administer aggressive acts.

No additional analysis is intended of the bureaucratic function.† Nor need we examine the bureaucrat who performs only the defensive function. It is natural for an individual to defend his life, his family, his country, his property. And, it would seem to follow that the individual to

*My analysis of do-goodism by aggression has assumed no other motivation on the part of do-gooders than to do good. This system, however, presupposes a harm to some, equal to the "good" for others. Considering the number of persons who get a positive pleasure from harming others, isn't it likely that some of the do-goodism is born of an impulse to do harm? The whole "soak-the-rich" category of epithets answers the question affirmatively.

†Ludwig von Mises. *Bureaucracy*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1946.

whom the defensive function has been delegated would act just as naturally. The neighborhood cop, performing only a defensive role, is as much a part of the neighborhood as the neighbors themselves.

The questions that need to be raised pertain to the effect of aggression on its instigators, its practitioners. Regarding these persons who aggressively pattern our ways to their wills—be such authority usurped or immorally granted—how do they compare with their former selves, before they exercised any such authority? Are they made wiser by reason of the possession of this aggressive authority? Are their moral standards improved? Or, possibly, is there some diminution in their wisdom and character? If so, the rest of us lose rather than gain either by letting them usurp aggressive authority or by improperly granting them these powers.*

Nature of Aggressive Force

FIRST, though, a re-emphasis of aggression and its nature: What kind of a force is it? Obviously, it is not creative. One cannot forcibly compel another to think, to imagine, to invent, to develop. Aggression is the forcible imposition of a judgment, not against the offense of others, but against the peace of others. It is molestation. It is man intervening, not against the destructive acts of others, but against the creative lives of others. If an aggressor is strong enough, or has a monopoly of the weapons, he can decrease the use of

*For a more complete analysis of what happens to the authoritarian, see my *Victims of Social Leveling* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953).

your energies and inhibit the employment of your faculties by putting you in chains or placing you behind walls. He can abolish your energies and faculties entirely by killing you. Or, in modern American terms, he can keep you from using your livelihood by taking it away from you. He can keep your livelihood low by forbidding you to accept what others are willing to pay in rent for the use of your house. If the aggressor is in political authority, he can reduce your income to zero by giving some of his aggressive powers to goon squads who, in turn, will keep you from opening your plant, although others may want to work for you. He can reduce your income to zero by forbidding you to procure the raw materials that your finished products require. The instances are endless in variety. And, no matter which one is chosen, it will be found to be an act of restricting or destroying creative energy and the exchange thereof.

We need make no inquiry about the effect on those of us on whom aggression is practiced. That it is destructive of our energies, our beings, our emergence as persons is self-evident. Let's think about what it does to its instigators and purveyors.

The Aggressor At Work

No person can perform a creative act while he is destroying you. This is by way of saying that he cannot grow in his own stature while he is reducing your stature. Indeed, if he takes your property, he must spend his time in concocting schemes and arguments leading you to believe that he has done you a positive good. Otherwise, he will have your enmity on his hands. Perhaps he will take some of

other people's property and give you part of it. That will show at least that he is equalitarian in his injustice. But, then, the enmities he faces will be multiplied. Maybe he will increase the volume of the money so you and the others will have more dollars than you formerly had, a neat trick if he can get away with it. And if you begin to catch on by reason of rising prices, he will pass a law making it illegal for prices to go up. If all of this results in slowing down production, which assuredly it will, then he can pick out certain groups in the population and place the blame for his mess on them. But have no worry, for then he will save you and all the others by taking over the whole productive process!

Look who is in charge of everything! A person who has degenerated from the decent citizen he once was to that point of ignorance where he believes all of us would be improved were we to be cast in his little image. He hasn't merely a Napoleonic complex; rather, he has come into possession of a Messianic complex. In simple fact, he has "gone off the beam."

Now, admittedly, this extreme does not take place in all users of aggressive force. This extreme happens only to a few of them. However, the reason it happens to only a few is because only a few are so vain, so lacking in humility, that they think themselves competent to direct everybody and everything. Only a few are totally vicious. Most aggressors are only part-time.* Still, any person is destroyed

*It seems apparent that the viciousness in the world has its origin mostly with well-intentioned folks. There simply are not enough criminals among us to otherwise account for it. For a fine historical example of a well-intentioned person employing vicious means to attain the most worthy of ends, read *Grey Eminence* by Aldous Huxley (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

to the extent he becomes an aggressor. One not only cannot rise toward his own potential while he is restricting the potential of others but also he sinks away from his potential. Degeneracy of the aggressor sets in as he acts to put others in a servile position. Any person, to the extent he practices slave-mastery, approaches the status of the slave he masters. The man who holds you onto your back is as permanently fastened on top of you as you are fastened under him. Both of you, in such positions, are useless. It is that simple.*

Urges To Aggression

WHAT is the basis of this urge to get on top of others, to have others “knuckle down” to one’s will? Why is this type of “superiority” so widely sought?

Quite likely it derives from egotism and covetousness—forms of ignorance. The many observe the few getting ahead of them. The few who attain any genuine superiority do so by the extension of their own personalities, by the process of self-realization. Over the long period, it is always such persons who are looked up to for the reason that they are the ones primarily responsible for progress; indeed, the general welfare depends on them. Thus, they are held in high esteem. There are many who envy those to whom this deserved tribute is paid. They, too, would like to feel needed; and they envy the importance of those who are needed. Failing to understand the distinction between get-

*For an excellent spelling-out of this idea, see *My Freedom Depends on Yours* by Dean Russell (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953).

ting on top by the development of self and getting relatively on top by holding others down, they take the latter course. They reject achievement and adopt aggressive force as a means of getting on top. Nothing is required of them except the organization and application of brute force—viciousness. It is as though a baboon had Goethe flat on his back and were exulting in his own superiority—egotism gone simian!

Those who vote for aggression, who ask that the governmental agency become responsible for our welfare, do more than merely impair their own potentials, their own energies, and the energies of millions of others who are suppliers to the kinetic conduit and on whom our existence and fortunes depend. In addition, they also impair the potentials and the energies of the ones who wield aggressive power. The process lessens the aggregate potential energy and destroys kinetic energy on a wholesale basis.

Learning By Rote No Good

ONE question that assuredly will be raised at this point will be: What are these instances, specifically, of destructive aggression? Can they not be named, and then memorized, as a means of avoidance?

There are several hundred thousand words in Webster's unabridged dictionary. If one will reflect on the impossible project of memorizing the nearly-endless variety of combinations into which all of these words can be arranged, one will have the answer as to whether acts of aggression can be identified by memory. These acts cannot be learned

by rote. There is no comprehensible limit to their possible variations.

Furthermore, it is nearly useless to engage in negative explanations—showing why a particular act of aggression is wrong. Prove only that it is wrong to steal potatoes, and one is left with the endless task of proving that it is wrong to steal every other item of property. Multiply this by the number of ways that life and property can be taken without consent, and one can appreciate the hopelessness of negation as a technique of comprehending and of doing away with aggression.

The technique of negation could be used to prove, for instance, that the world is not square. Then there would still remain the endless task of proving that it is not any one of thousands of other shapes. But prove that the world *is* round, and there the argument about the shape of the earth is ended.

Necessity For Point Of Reference

AND, so it is with this problem. Proving that the taking of life and property is wrong is not enough. It is more important to prove the rightness of extending life and property. Proving this to another, however, is difficult, if not impossible, unless there is agreement on a basic point of reference, unless there is acceptance of the moral principle on which such a positive philosophy rests. This appears to be basic: The highest purpose of each individual's existence, regardless of race, creed, or color, is the fullest possible realization of that existence—that is, coming as near as one can in one's lifetime to attaining those creative potential-

ties peculiarly one's own — emergence or emergent evolution.

With this premise once embraced, one cannot accept or justify any act of aggression, no matter how cleverly contrived or for whatever purpose. A person cannot, for example, agree that you have a right to your life and the fruits of your labor and then take some of you and of yours without your consent—to help him or others—without standing in bold contradiction of his own premise. If he does not accept this premise of life with its potential fullness as valid for others as for himself, he must logically accept the only alternative premise: Might makes right. All aggressors, knowingly or unknowingly, are supporters of the might-makes-right theory. This conclusion requires no more proof than its declaration.

The object of any serious person who would avoid becoming the victim of one conflicting plausibility after another, who frowns on living a life of contradictions, should be to find a morally sound premise to be used constantly as a point of reference. Answers to all proposals, then, whether one's own or someone else's, may be quickly obtained by referring to the starting premise. Is the proposal consistent or inconsistent with the premise? If the premise is right, all proposals become right or wrong according to their consistency or inconsistency with the premise.

Means And Ends

AGGRESSION, however, will rarely be totally rejected by persons who retain the belief that, in some instances, it is the sole means to ends they think good. There are many who

fail to see how activities they believe to be useful could be carried on in any manner other than by aggressive force. Even though they may believe that the compelling of one to abide by another's judgment is evil—that viciousness is not a commendable way of life—they prefer the practice of some evil to the abandonment of what they think are worthy objects. They subscribe to and live by the vicious philosophy that the end justifies the means.

But it just isn't possible that evil means can achieve good ends. Either the means they employ are not, in fact, evil, or the ends they have in view are not, in fact, good! Something has to be wrong with the evil-means, good-ends equation.*

"It is right that poor Joe and his family should pay lower rent. True, it is wrong to force Mr. Houseman to take less for his apartment than others are willing to pay. But on balance Joe's right overpowers Mr. Houseman's wrong. Thus, rent control [aggression] is right!"

The above is an example of a supposed good end justifying the use of an acknowledged evil means. Important, also, is the fact that the person who reasons in this manner believes himself, *on balance*, to be right. He believes himself to be just as right as the person who rejects evil means for any and all purposes. The distinction between the two is in the value they place on evil and good. There

*"Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed." Ralph Waldo Emerson. *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1940. p. 176.

are those whose aversion to evil is so pronounced—and whose belief in its inefficacy is so confirmed—that no object, however desirable, can move them. These are not the persons under discussion.

End Pre-Exists In Means

THE persons under discussion are those who believe that a good object can be attained by an evil means; that the good object would otherwise go unattained. There are two rational approaches to such persons:

1. Demonstrate that evil can never beget good; that whatever evil begets is not good, even by definition; that evil is the impairment of one's own development and that of others; that aggression—compelling others to bend or knuckle under to one's own will—is an impairment of oneself and of others; that any product of evil means is an evil product, *for the very simple reason that the end pre-exists in the means.**
2. Demonstrate that all proper ends can be accomplished without any aggression whatsoever.

The first point would appear to be self-evident to any person who elects to think on the subject. And it ought to suffice as a guide to action without any discussion of the second point. But, in most instances, it does not suffice.

*An elaboration of the idea that there is no such thing as short-range evils adding up to a long-range good, and vice versa, is to be found in an article of mine entitled "Let's Be Practical" which appears in *Reflections on Faith and Freedom* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Spiritual Mobilization, 1952).

If There Were No Aggression At All

THE questions posed by the second point are: What would things be like if the governmental agency in all its forms—federal, state, and local—should confine itself to the securing of the rights to life and property of all citizens equally? Writing the code of Do Nots appertaining thereto, adjudicating and administering them, and keeping the records incidental thereto? Employing no force beyond repellent force? Never using an iota of aggression? One hundred per cent free of aggression? All the rest being left to citizens in voluntary effort and to charity as advanced by Judeo-Christian philosophy? What would happen?

True, there wouldn't be any new pyramids or their equivalent. There wouldn't be any more Tennessee Valley Authorities or municipally owned utilities, even municipal sewer systems or water works. There wouldn't be any more public (government) golf courses or the continuance by taxation of those that now exist. There wouldn't be any Marshall Plan or Point Four Program. There wouldn't be any rent control or other wage and price controls. There wouldn't be any public (government) post office. There wouldn't be any publicly subsidized businesses. Indeed, there are many thousands of millions of aggressively collected dollars that would not be spent each year through government agencies.

By the same token, however, the citizens would have the same many thousands of millions of dollars to use annually in accord with the dictates of their own creative judgments. What would they do with all these resources were the citizens not aggressively de-financed by government agencies?

Faith In Free Men

Of one thing we can be certain: There would be more progress than there is now. In America, where government *has been* limited more than in any other country, the progress has been the greatest. Where the obstacles to creative energy and its exchange have been the least, the release of energy has been the most.*

Another thing we know: These unobstacled Americans would provide themselves with power and light. There is proof of this. Other countries, all more socialistic—that is, where more aggressive force is used—than in America, failed in approaching our production before we permitted any government agency to get its foot in our electrical energy door. Power and light would, without question, be cheaper under private ownership than it is in the subsidized Tennessee Valley.† In addition, all the rest of the citizens of our country would have their own positions improved by not being compelled to finance the deficits of TVA and other socialized electrical projects.

Strange as it may seem to most folks, there would be sewer systems and water works if these necessities were

*For a brilliant exposition of this point, see *If Men Were Free To Try* by John Sparks (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1954).

†It is difficult to imagine how low all prices would be relative to wages and salaries if the activities of government included no aggression. Not only would there be the deductions of the costs of aggressive actions, but there would be the release of all energy which aggression now restrains. Prices of goods, relative to wages and salaries, would trend downward with the advance of technology and efficiency. And, if government effectively defended against fraud in money, there would be the absence of inflation-caused price rises.

left exclusively to private ownership. Hundreds of communities in the United States, even today, have sewer and water services privately supplied. There is no valid reason why this should not be unanimous.

And golf courses? By what stretch of the socialistic imagination should the wealthy Mr. Heminway or the Widow Doakes, neither of whom has any interest in golf, be made to pay for a sport out of which a few of us happen to derive a pleasure? There is some evidence—hundreds of cases—that golf can do with voluntary arrangements.

Foreign Aid

AID to foreign countries? Following the bleak days of our Civil War, it was not the governments of European countries that made loans to our industries and transportation systems. These loans came mostly from British, Dutch, and other investors—private investors. Were our own federal government not pre-empting international lending, American capitalists (savers, large and small) would lend capital to foreign countries; and the loans would be made to prospectively successful enterprises instead of to socialistic governments that use the funds with an eye to maintaining themselves in power.

How would prices be controlled? By the market, the thoroughly honest system, the only just method known to man for determining the value of one's services or goods. Prices would be where all the people placed them with their purchases or lack of purchases, not where some aggressor expediently would like to have them, not where they serve as a political cover-up for the dilution of the money supply.

The mails too would be distributed—more efficiently and at a lower cost. For example, milk is more perishable than a cashier's check, a personal letter, or a catalogue. Yet, under private auspices, milk is delivered every day to millions of people—with a high degree of honesty, punctuality, efficiency.

Health? Good health is a problem in the creative area. Here as in other problems, the agency of government has only the defensive function to perform—that is, the restraining and penalizing of practices by some careless or dishonest persons that endanger the health of all. The police force, for example, shouldn't permit the selling of polluted water, the running of filthy restaurants represented to the public as sanitary, the existence of defective cesspools that would spread disease, or fraudulent representations about medicines.

But What About Aggression In Education?

THE above, it is obvious, are relatively simple matters, requiring little thought to realize how we could achieve good ends by men in voluntary action. However, it is as useless as it is impossible to try to cover the field. But no student of this subject can stop here. One important and emotional issue might as well be faced. What about education? No single object rates higher in approval, and no end relies more on aggressive means than government education. Government education is always the final test tossed at anyone who takes a thoroughly anti-aggressor position. Answer this, they say, or the theory of voluntary action does not necessarily apply as the means to achieve a creative

end. With the agencies of government restricted to securing rights to life and property and to other defensive functions as herein suggested, would not important progress cease in education?

Aggression is employed in government education in three ways: Government compels attendance; government dictates curricula; government collects expenses for government education by the use of aggressive as distinguished from defensive force. The absence of individual choice as to attendance, studies, and payment is implicit in the government educational system.

Originally, there wasn't much question raised as to whether aggression in education would have a good or bad effect. The point seems to have been glossed over. Education, somehow, had to be insured or guaranteed. A country having a people's government could not take the risk of having ignorant voters. If citizens were left to their own resources, they might let their children go uneducated. Surely, this was a department of life where only aggressive force could remove such dangers. So went the argument, and so it still goes. And the argument has become so indelibly imprinted on the minds of Americans that, today, education without aggression is viewed as a figment of fancy—an impossibility.

But here this point-blank question is raised: Can aggressive force produce any education at all? Can a machete or any other form of viciousness abolish ignorance?

If aggressive force is evil—and if the end pre-exists in the means—then it follows that compulsory education is evil. Or if education is good, then it cannot possibly be the product of aggression. These conclusions must be correct,

or one or both of the assumptions must be proved to be wrong. It appears that the assumptions and the conclusions are correct, for is not aggressive force evil? And does not the end pre-exist in the means? And all of us believe that education is good.

If Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours, Thomas Jefferson, and Horace Mann—leading sponsors of government education because they sincerely believed that representative government could not function without an intelligent electorate—could see where their “educated electorates” have taken this country, might they not want to re-examine their idea for government guaranteed enlightenment? For surely, these men, devotees of limited police force, would be shocked were they to observe the socialism of present-day America.*

Aggression Begets Aggression

HINDSIGHT is more illuminating than foresight. Indeed, is not most foresight based on hindsight? But isn't it now obvious that any system of education which had aggressive force as its essential characteristic might well result in authoritarian thinking? How a child, during the formative years of life, could spend a large portion of his waking

*Thomas Jefferson can be quoted as opposed to government education: “Opposition to the fund was most forcefully expressed by Thomas Jefferson. Although he approved its purposes, he was opposed to state subsidies for local government functions. His chief objection was, however, to the central board set up under the act of February 12, 1811. Rather than have a system of schools managed for, rather than by, the people, Jefferson would have withdrawn his support of the proposed system entirely. As well, he thought, commit the management of farms, mills, and stores to the governor and council.” From *A History of Education in West Virginia* by Charles H. Ambler (Huntington, W. Virginia: Standard Printing and Publishing Company, 1951. pp. 19-20).

hours in a socialistic institution and not emerge with socialistic ideas, defies the imagination. Many persons who believe aggressive force to be evil, if called upon to name the one single behavior pattern more responsible than any other for such socialism as we now have in America, would, no doubt, name the aggressive elements in our education system. All the furor now going on against our schools, if carefully diagnosed, would be found to stem from this one evil. The fact that false reasons are assigned—teachers being blamed, systems of teaching charged as imperfect, taxpayers not paying “sufficient” salaries for instruction, or whatever—is due only to casual analysis. The cause appears to lie with the chief identifiable evil—aggressive force.

This is not to say that a great amount of good education is not going on in government schools in these United States. Nor is this to assert that all teachers who are employed by the government school system—a socialistic institution—are socialists. Many of the most admirable people in America today, as measured in terms of the free market, private property, limited government philosophy, are to be found among our government school teachers. This, however, is the point: *The good work being done in government education is in spite of, not because of, aggressive force.* Aggressive force is the single point in the educational argument here at issue.

If Aggressive Force Were Removed

Now, let us imagine that all the aggressive aspects of education were removed—the forced attendance, the dictated curricula, the compulsory collection to meet the expenses

thereof. Let us imagine that the entire educational endeavor were left exclusively to self-determination—as self-determining as religion in America now is.

What would happen?

No one can know! Some will say that this is a retreat from this argument. On the contrary, it is in support of the argument.

No one can completely predict what will happen to you if you are compelled to do as someone else says. One can predict, however, that you will not function fully in a creative sense if others can succeed in acting authoritatively over you, in placing obstacles in your way. But no one can know at all what you will do creatively if released from obstacles. Indeed, you cannot make such predictions yourself. What new idea will you have tomorrow? What invention? What will you do if a new necessity, an unexpected responsibility, presents itself? No one can know.

Confining the discussion to education, assume that you are no longer compelled to send Johnnie to school. No government committee prescribes what Johnnie must study. No government tax collector takes a penny of your income for schooling.

Is Johnnie in any less need of learning than before? Are other persons—teachers, for instance—any less wise or less available for counsel and employment? Is there less money for educational purposes? Would you spend the amount you are no longer compelled to pay in taxes on cigarettes or whiskey or vacations rather than on Johnnie's education? If so, you value Johnnie's education less than you value your own consumption of cigarettes and whiskey or

the taking of vacations. In this case you make a choice—a choice that you obviously think to be the better alternative. Else you would not do it because only a moron would claim that he had decided to choose what he values least when he could choose what he values most. Shall we say someone else thinks your judgment is bad if you decide to favor whiskey over education? Do you wish someone else to force you to behave his way? You can't possibly say that you think your choice is the best and accept, at the same time, someone else's verdict that it is the worst. That is utter nonsense. Aggressive force, if applied to you, can only contradict your judgments. If applied to others, it can only contradict their judgments. Who possibly can be the appropriate aggressor, they or you? Or a political committee which cannot be better than the lowest common denominator of them and you?*

Religion And Education

WHY should not education be just as self-determining as religion? Is education more important than religion? Americans condemn Russians, for instance, more for being ungodly than for knowing how to make little else than vodka and caviar that can compete in international trade.† If

*For a discussion of committees, men acting in council, see my *On That Day Began Lies* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1949).

†Their MIG 15's, for example, which we hear are relatively efficient killers, are not in international trade. They have so little to offer that they are not significant at all in such competition.

we frown at communists for their ungodliness, how can we support ungodliness by favoring aggressive force in our own country? Authoritarianism is but man trying to play God, trying to cast others in his own infinitesimal image.

Are high moral standards and improving attitudes toward one's life and toward the lives of others—prime objects of religion—of less value than knowing how to read or to write or to add two and two? Indeed, are not education and religion intimately personal matters, one as much as the other? Is the education of another any more of one's business than the religion of another? And if one is concerned, should he seek to attend to his own interest by placing obstacles in the way of others—that is, by employing aggressive force to others?

In most countries, and certainly in America, the idea of being compelled by government to attend churches, or having government dictation of the subjects clergymen must speak about, or having the expenses of religious institutions forcibly collected by the tax man, would be repulsive in the extreme. Why do people believe in aggressive force for education and self-determination for religion? Logically, there appears to be no basis for the distinction. Tradition, custom—living with a mistake so long that reason is rarely brought to bear—may be the explanation.*

*Another explanation may be the belief that parents simply would not adequately finance the education of their children. In one city (Pittsburgh, Pa.) where some research has been done, it is estimated that voluntary contributions to all churches exceed \$15,000,000 annually. This is three-fourths of the annual, compulsory collection for all their government schools! Right or wrong, most people think that education in temporal matters is more important than instruction in spiritual matters. There is little question about adequate voluntary support of education were there no compulsion.

The Fool Is Always Someone Else

HAVING for long been a disbeliever in aggressive force in any and all forms, I have constantly and over a long period of time asked individuals in various occupational levels if they would let their children go uneducated were all compulsions to be removed. The answer is always in the same vein, no matter to whom the question is addressed. In effect, it is: "Do you think I am a fool? I would no more think of letting my children go without an education than I would think of letting them go without shoes and stockings. But some forms of compulsion are necessary, for there are many persons who do not have the same concern for their children as I have." And there you have it! Authoritarianism is always needed for the other fellow. But try to find this other fellow! The other fellow's fault—the possibility of his having no interest in himself or in his offspring—is more imaginary than real. It is, for the most part, a fiction of the aggressive myth. If every parent in this country were to consider authoritarianism in education as applying only to himself and could divorce from his thinking the "incompetency" of others, there would be no aggressive force whatever applied to American education. Let any reader of this monograph, regardless of wealth status, honestly try this exercise and arrive at any other conclusion!

Child-Parent Relationship

A CHILD, from the time he is born until he reaches adulthood, is but the extension of the parent's responsibility.

The child's education, no more than his religion or his morals or his manners or his sustenance, can properly be turned out to pasture. There can be no more proper shifting to others the primary responsibility for the child's education than there can be a proper shifting of responsibilities for the parent's virtues. There are some things that properly remain for one's own attentions, no matter how enticingly and powerfully specialization and division of labor may beckon one. And, the education of one's children is a case in point.

This does not mean that the parent should not have help—a lot of specialized help—with the educational responsibility. It does mean that the parent cannot be relieved of the educational responsibility without injury to himself—that is, without injury to his own person and to the child who is but the extension of his personal responsibility.

Education A Life-Long Process

ACCORDING to the premise on which this thesis is based, man's highest purpose in life is the unfolding of his own personality, the realization, as nearly as possible, of his potential, his emergence. Such achievement presupposes that the educational process will go on through all of adulthood, as well as through childhood. Indeed, school for the child, if it is to have any meaning, is but the preparation for a dynamic, continuing process of education. The test of whether any primary and secondary educational system is meeting the requirements of education is: Does it set the stage for adult learning?

How does the application of aggressive force bear on

this question? It tends to relieve parents of educational responsibilities and, thus, to dismantle any educational stage they may have had in mind for themselves. Aggression says, in effect, to the parent: "Forget about the education of your child. We, the government, will compel the child to go to school regardless of how you think on the matter. Do not fret unduly about what the child shall study. We, the agency of compulsion, have that all attended to. And don't worry about the financing of education. We, the instrument of authority, will take the fruits of your labor to pay our expenses. You, the parent, are to be relieved of any choice as to that."

These aggressive devices lead to two grave educational errors. First, the parent is robbed of the educational stimulus that would be his were he to be responsible for the education of his child. Joe Doakes would be educationally more fit if he had to understand what Johnnie is supposed to learn. He would have to "keep his hand in."

Second, these authoritarian devices falsely earmark the educational period. They say, ever so compellingly, that the period of education is the period to which aggressive force applies. The ceremonies of "graduation"—diplomas and licenses—if not derivatives of these devices, are consistent with them. This system is resulting in young folks' coming out of school thinking of themselves as educated and thinking of the beginning of earning as the end of learning. If any devotee of aggressive force will concede that learning ought to be through all of life, he should, to be consistent, insist on compulsory educational devices for adults as well as for children—for the octogenarian as well as for the teen-ager. For what profit is there in a system

which, were it to meet its claims of giving a start to education, puts an end to learning just at the time when the spirit of inquiry should begin its most meaningful growth?*

More And Better Education

It was stated above that no one could have knowledge as to what would happen were there to be no more aggressive force at all in education. That is correct concerning specifics and details, but there are certain general things which are known and can be predicted in advance. For instance, one knows that creative energies would be released; that latent potential energies would turn to kinetic activities. Creative thought on education would manifest itself in millions of existences. Such genius as we potentially and compositely possess would assert itself and take the place of present deadening restraints. A person with a genuine faith in free men knows, without any qualification whatsoever, that there would be more education and

*"The normal human brain always contains a greater store of neuroblasts than can possibly develop into neurons during the span of life, and the potentialities of the human cortex are never fully realized. There is a surplus and, depending upon physical factors, education, environment and conscious effort, more or less of the initial store of neuroblasts will develop into mature, functioning neurons. The development of the more plastic and newer tissue of the brain depends to a large extent upon the conscious efforts made by the individual. There is every reason to assume that development of cortical functions is promoted by mental activity and that continued mental activity is an important factor in the retention of cortical plasticity into late life. Goethe . . . [and others] are among the numerous examples of men whose creative mental activities extended into the years associated with physical decline. . . . There also seem sufficient grounds for the assumption that habitual disuse of these highest centers results in atrophy or at least brings about a certain mental decline." Renee von Eulenburg-Wiener, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

better education. And he is confident that the costs measured in learning accomplishment would be far less. There wouldn't be any authoritarian items for which to pay. Nor would there be the financial irresponsibility that characterizes those who spend other people's money.

Not only is this faith in uninhibited, creative human energy rationally justified, but also there is evidence aplenty to confirm it. In other words, this faith is supported both theoretically and pragmatically. Except for the pathological cases of those who are temperamentally slaves—those who seek a shepherd and a sheep dog, those who are revolted by the thought of self-reliance, those who are ideologically attuned to authoritarianism—there does not exist a single activity now being conducted by man in voluntary action that could, in most people's opinions, be improved were it to be owned or controlled by agencies employing aggressive force. But put any one of these activities, now voluntarily conducted, under government control, leave it there for a few years, and general opinion would then conclude that it could not be conducted voluntarily.

Twenty-five years from now, after the electric power industry has been nationalized for a decade—a likely event if past trends maintain—there will be only a few people in America who will favor a return to private ownership and operation. The vast majority will not understand how that activity could exist without aggressive force and still serve the people.

It is this same remoteness that accounts for much of the shortcoming in faith as to educational productiveness were the educational system relieved of restraints and compulsions. The restraints, be it remembered, are in the form of

taxes—the taking away of the wherewithal to finance one's own educational plan. The compulsions are in the form of forced attendance and dictated curricula.

Aids To A Restoration Of Faith

SEVERAL aids to the restoration of faith in freedom for education are:

1. Observe activities not yet socialized—that is, not yet conducted by aggressive force. They are doing all right by man in voluntary action. The less the socialization of activities in any country, the better off are the people in that country.
2. What is there which we know how to do, and for which there is an effective demand, which remains undone in America? Not a thing except what aggressive force restricts! There are many thousands of individuals, expert in educational techniques, that have the know-how.
Effective demand? Can anyone argue with reason that there can be education of those who do not want it? The answer to that question is simply the answer to the question, "What can anyone force another to learn?" If we want education—and we cannot have it if we do not want it—we will have education. Authoritarianism—applying aggressive force—is antagonistic to the extremely sensitive spirit of inquiry, the will to learn. Remove all aggression, and we remove education's chief initiated obstacle.
3. While one cannot know of the brilliant steps that

would be taken by millions of education-conscious parents were they and not the state to have the educational responsibility, one can imagine the great variety of cooperative and private enterprises that would emerge. There would be thousands of private schools, large and small, not unlike some of the ones we now have. There would be tutoring arrangements of a variety and ingenuity impossible to foresee. No doubt there would be corporate and charitably financed institutions of chain store dimensions, dispensing reading, writing, and arithmetic at bargain prices. There would be competition, which is cooperation's most useful tool.* There would be a parent alertness as to what the market would have to offer. There would be parental responsibility for their children's and their own educational growth. Socialism would not be advocated in the classroom except, possibly, to the children of the well-to-do who could afford such waste and extravagance. The market, by its nature, would rule out most of the frills. Competition would dictate that.

4. Recall the year 1900. Suppose someone had been able to conjure up a picture of a 1954 automobile and all of its wonderful performances. And suppose you had been asked how it could have been produced at that time. You could not even have grasped such a miracle, let alone have described

*Without competition among bakers, for instance, I have no basis for deciding on the baker with whom I will exchange, cooperate.

how it could have been made. Yet, it has been produced, and without aggressive force. Indeed, what would the 1954 car be like if the government had compelled attendance at research laboratories, dictated the subjects to be studied, and forcibly collected the revenues for same? Would there be any car at all? And, if so, would anyone have the money left to buy one? Millions of unobstacled man-hours of ever-increasing skills and thinking, in a constant and complex exchange process, have made the 1954 car possible. And so it would be with education in a free society. We cannot foretell what would happen were the mind of man applied to this activity, were as much creative, uninhibited thought put to education as has been put to motor cars. As it is, a vast majority of the people have given little more than cursory thought as to how to educate without the agency of compulsion. No wonder! We have the tendency not to think about problems not our own, about activities pre-empted by government. Remove all initiated obstacles and the kinetic activity of man approaches his potential energy. Aggressive force as an effective means to the educational end is but a superstition. It has no foundation in fact.

5. The children of the poor? They obtained food and clothing before we practiced governmental alms—more than ever known of before. But education isn't as important as food? Education is only as important as life itself. Furthermore, remove the bill we are paying for aggressive activities, and

poor parents will not be as poor. And literally millions of Americans would like nothing better than to practice charity—than to give an education to the children of those who might be in unfortunate circumstances. The acceptance of charity is degrading? That is an unforgivable socialistic cliché. It is precisely the same thing as saying that the voluntary giving of one's goods to another is degrading. For how can the giving be a brotherly act and the receiving be degrading? Perhaps charity isn't as agreeable to the recipient as living off the fruits of his own labors. But it ought to be more agreeable than living off the livelihood of others taken by aggressive force. This dispute is Judeo-Christian charity versus legal thievery and viciousness. The libertarian prefers charity.*

The educational question has been belabored primarily to demonstrate that there is no valid case for aggressive force in the one instance in which it has its greatest number of devotees. If aggression has no rational basis in education, it has no basis for use in any creative activity. The fact that we cannot imagine how we could do without aggressive force in education or in any other activity is to be laid to the weakening of our imaginations and the curbing of our thoughts, not to the inefficacy of man in creative action.

*The one who believes in government limited to defensive functions rejects, of course, all thought of police grants-in-aid as a means of satisfying his compassion for others. His reliance is on Judeo-Christian charity, a voluntary response that needs a far better understanding than it now has. See *Charity: Biblical and Political* by Russell J. Clinchy (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1951).

Opposing Aggressive Force In Education

Now, as sure as the sun will rise, some “patriot” will say that one who holds to these views is opposed to the education of children because he is opposed to compulsion in education—to governmental control over the minds of children. Such a deduction could come from confused thinking only. Is one to be accused of being opposed to religion because he is opposed to government control over our ministers and churches? Is one to be accused of being opposed to eating food because he is opposed to governmentally owned and operated grocery stores and restaurants? In all three instances, it seems that the only fair accusation against the person being criticized is that he has a faith in freedom—that is, a faith in the release of the human spirit. And for that, who needs to apologize to anyone?

According to these views—regardless of how devoutly we may desire a pyramid, an auditorium, prosperity for a person or a group, or any other object requiring creative activity—what we cannot accomplish without aggressive force should be left undone. That we would have more than we now have is certain. That our material, intellectual, and spiritual possessions would be different is certain. That released, creative human energy is more productive than restrained human energy is also certain.

Erroneous Reputations

It may seem strange to many persons that the free-market, voluntary-society, limited-government philosophy has the reputation of being harsh and severe, of the “dog-eat-dog,”

“back-to-the-jungle” type while the socialistic, social-leveling-by-aggressive-force philosophy has the reputation of being kind, considerate, charitable, liberal, humanitarian. And, indeed, this is strange, for the reputations should, in all truth, be reversed.

There are numerous reasons for these erroneous reputations, and it is important that the reasons be known. If there is not a better understanding of these philosophies and the reasons for the antagonisms they evoke than now exists, most people will continue to exert themselves in opposition to the interests of themselves and others.

The first reason that comes to mind has to do with motivations. While fresh air and good drinking water are essential to health, one will not find active protagonists for either of these among a country people where fresh air and good water are in abundant supply. These essentials are taken for granted. Their unquestioned availability no more activates articulate supporters than do the life necessities of breathing and sleeping. They fall in that vast category of phenomena that just “come naturally.”

The Free Market And Protagonists

CREATIVE energy and its exchange belong to natural phenomena. They are necessities in the sense that a necessity is something one has to have or else he dies. And, as with fresh air, water, breathing, sleeping, they do not tend to create protagonists. We don't observe speakers and writers taking time out to support Old Sol. Yet without the sun, all of us would perish. Similarly, Mrs. Jones does not wax eloquent over the swapping of the shawl she has made

for the goose that Mrs. Smith has raised. The Jones-Smith free market is as natural as life itself. The Jones-Smith free market is, indeed, the living of life. But the living of life does not tend to inspire vocal advocates. It is a taken-for-granted affair. The taken-for-granted assumption is that life has a higher Grantor than the likes of us.

Socialism And Protagonists

Now consider the motivations on the other side of this controversy. If one were going to offer people substitutes for fresh air, water, the sun, he would have to become adept at conjury and devise some pretty sharp talk to put over his schemes.

Reflect on all of the persons who are covetous, on all who derive a satisfaction in pulling others down to their own level, on all who are gullible, on all who would attain affluence regardless of method, on all who would have others behave like themselves, on all whose compassion for others is beyond self-satisfaction and who would, if they could, reapportion the possessions of individuals to fit their own concepts of justice. These folks, added together, make quite a multitude. There is but one means to their "worthy" ends: Gain power over others, not repellent or defensive power for themselves, but the power to initiate aggressive force over those whose lives they would redesign and shape, the power to designate the number of hours Mrs. Jones shall work making shawls, the power to direct Mrs. Smith to "plow under" a specified percentage of her geese, the power to control exchange—in short, the power to com-

mand the living of others' lives. It takes clever talk to sell these schemes. Such talk has been going on throughout recorded history, and much of it has succeeded: coin-clipping, the divine right of kings, monetizing debt, rent control, compulsory social security, and thousands of other instances of inhibited energy and thwarted exchange.*

The socialistic, government-as-ruler philosophy has over the years developed a line of distinguished arguers, facile talkers, adept protagonists. If another's aim were to gain power over you, he would first try to convince you of the advantages that would accrue to you. Success would be possible if he could persuade you that his overlordship would do you good; that to take from others and give to you, or to take from you and give to others—there is no difference—would qualify as kind, considerate, liberal, charitable, humanitarian. Success would be assured if he could wean you away from your natural ways of acting creatively and exchanging. He would associate these natural ways of yours with greed, selfishness, tooth-and-claw behavior, jungle tactics; in short, he would drown these natural ways in a sea of derogatory epithets.

On the socialistic side of the controversy are the motivations for "selling." And, the "selling" task is made easier by the simplicity of authoritarian "welfare." It is, divested of legal trappings and sleight-of-hand frills as employed in monetizing debt, as simple as the Robin Hood technique. Indeed, it is the same thing.

*See my *Two Kinds of Exchange* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: Foundation for Economic Education, 1953).

There Is No Free-Market Blueprint

ON the free-market or creative-energy-and-its-exchange side of the controversy is the lack of motivations that develop protagonists. In addition, there is the difficulty—the impossibility—of explaining phenomena that defy complete diagnosis. The free market is not a system in the sense that it can be blueprinted. It is energy and energy exchanges.

The workings of human energy are so complex and diverse that man, at his intellectual best, stands in awe of its wonders. He can do little more than to make observations of certain aspects of its workings, draw deductions therefrom, and live in harmony with the truth as he discovers it. This side of the controversy tends to motivate research and discovery, not salesmanship, not articulate protagonism. *The only selling that can be done is the revealing of that which has been discovered.* This is vastly different from peddling a scheme—something that can be simply blueprinted or put in a package, so to speak. Indeed, the free market can be “sold” only in the sense that some persons can induce other persons to go in search of truth for themselves.

Let us, however, not accept socialism as humanitarian and the free market as harsh on the say-so of those who have social packages to sell. Admittedly, energy and energy exchanges cannot be completely described. But one can catch glimpses of their workings, at least enough to develop a healthy skepticism toward the human plans for planning human beings.

The Free Market Is Humanitarian

RECENTLY, on being conducted through a paper mill, I was shown a new and huge machine that cost \$2,500,000. Countless types of human energy and energy exchanges, extending into the infinite past, went into its making, as did the types of energy required to accumulate that much capital.

At the beginning of the machine was a series of large pipes. These delivered, with considerable force, a whitish liquid that contacted a rapidly moving copper screen. The screen wended its way through and around dryers, ironers, and other devices, and deposited at the other end in a continuous flow a wide sheet of cleansing tissue.

"What is that liquid?" asked I.

"That's nothing but highly gyrated water containing wood pulp. As it makes contact with the copper screen, the water goes through; but the pulp is evenly distributed, continuing on for ironing, drying, and other processing, and emerges as the finished product."

"What kind of wood do you use for the pulp?"

"Spruce."

"One of these days you folks will run out of spruce. Then what will you use?"

"We are planting spruce faster than we are harvesting it."

"How long does it take a seedling, after planting, before it is ready for harvesting?"

"Eighty years here in the north country."

"Where do you get the seedlings?"

"We have several large nurseries. It takes about three

years from the time the seed is planted until the seedling is ready for transplanting."

At this point I visualized a man who had the skills for, and had a primary interest in, this type of husbandry. In this, his chosen field, he would, in a lifetime, start millions of spruce trees. And then these thoughts: This man's energy going into the planting and the nurturing; that energy stored for 80 years in a forest while nature expanded it; its flowing through the pulp stage; and, finally, its going through the machine and coming out as cleansing tissue. The human energy of this nurseryman, among literally millions of others over the whole period of conscious man, manifesting itself as cleansing tissue!

Contemplating further: What does this man's energy in the form of paper tissue accomplish? Among other things, it is an aid to sanitation. Then an historical fact came to mind: In the British Isles, 300 years ago, many a mother brought 20 children into the world, only for two of them to reach adulthood.* The decrease in infant mortality has been due to improvements in sanitary methods to a large extent, products of creative energy and its exchange (the so-called Industrial Revolution). Anything, then, that contributes to sanitation, and thus to the extension of human beings, is humanitarian if the term has any meaning at all. This product also relieves human beings from menial laundering, releasing them for higher callings. That's humanitarian too! The nurseryman's creative energy flowing,

*"It is not uncommon, I have been frequently told, in the Highlands of Scotland for a mother who has borne twenty children not to have two alive." From *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1937. p. 79).

growing, and taking new forms in the forest, flowing through factories and over highways and railroads and in the air, freely attracting to it countless other forms of human energy, flowing on as an aid to millions of people! A man attending to his own interests, developing those potentialities peculiarly his own! And, at the same time, contributing to the welfare of his fellow men!

Socialism Is Jungle Law

VERY interesting, indeed! Why not, though, test this energy concept in a socialistic equation and see what happens? How about France as having a prohibitive tariff against this American-made cleansing tissue? Embargoes, import quotas, and tariffs are schemes of man—aggressive force devices—to help some while restraining exchange on the part of others, as socialistic as TVA or socialized medicine. What would be the effect of a French tariff against this tissue? The answer is clear: The nurseryman's energy would be prohibited from flowing to the benefit of millions of French men and women. Obvious conclusion: Socialism is the truly severe, harsh, back-to-the-jungle philosophy.

Energy And Energy Exchanges Illustrated

At this point it is appropriate to expand an idea previously expressed—namely, that the free market is not a system that can be blueprinted; that it is energy and energy exchanges; that it is complex; and that discerning persons cannot help but stand in awe of its wonders. This can be

done by drawing on and paraphrasing Frederic Bastiat.*

Let us take, by way of illustration, a man in the humble walks of life—our nurseryman, for instance—and observe the various services he renders to society and receives from society. We shall be greatly impressed with the enormous disproportion which is apparent.

This man employs his day's labor in preparing soil, planting seeds, fertilizing the tender plants, and so on. If he is at all like the vast majority of people, he complains of his condition; yet, in truth, what does he receive from others in exchange for his work?

First of all, on getting up in the morning, he dresses himself, and he himself has personally made none of the numerous articles of which his clothing consists. Now, in order to put at his disposal this clothing, simple as it is, an enormous amount of labor, industry, and locomotion, and many ingenious inventions, must have been employed. People from other states must have produced cotton, some others indigo, and still others wool, flax, and hides; and all these materials must have been transported to various towns where they have been worked up, spun, woven, dyed, finished, and prepared for merchandising.

Then he breakfasts. In order to procure him the bread which he eats every morning, land must have been cleared, enclosed, labored, manured, sown; the fruits of the soil must have been preserved with care from pillage, and an innumerable multitude of people must have been secured

*The next 11 paragraphs are paraphrased from a chapter entitled "Natural and Artificial Organization" in Frederic Bastiat's *Harmonies of Political Economy* (Santa Ana, Calif.: The Register Publishing Co., Ltd., 1944).

against marauders; the wheat must have been cut down, ground into flour, kneaded, and prepared; iron, steel, wood, and stone must have been converted by industry into instruments of labor; some men must have employed animal force, others water power or electrical energy—all matters of which each, taken singly, presupposes a mass of labor, whether we have regard for space or time, of incalculable amount.

Things Received From Others

IN the course of the day, this man will have occasion to use sugar, oil, and various other materials and utensils.

He steps to the telephone and calls his Wisconsin headquarters. The creative energy of Alexander Graham Bell and of tens of thousands of others, past and present—metallurgists, electrical and mechanical engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, linemen, operators—in an instant flow through time and space to his service.

He sends his son to school, there to receive an education which, although limited, nevertheless implies anterior study, research, and an extent of knowledge which startles the imagination.

A neighbor goes to law with him. He finds advocates to plead his case, judges to maintain his rights, officers of justice to put the sentence in execution—all of which implies acquired knowledge and, consequently, intelligence and means of subsistence.

He goes to church. It is a stupendous monument, and the book which he carries thither is a monument, perhaps still more stupendous, of human intelligence. He is taught

morals; he has his mind enlightened, his soul elevated; and in order to do this, we must suppose that another man has previously frequented schools and libraries, consulted all the sources of human learning, and while so employed has been able to live without occupying himself directly with the wants of the body.

The World Of Miracles

IF our nurseryman undertakes a journey, he finds that, in order to save him time and exertion, other men have removed and leveled the soil, filled up valleys, hewed down mountains, united the banks of rivers, diminished friction, placed wheeled carriages on rails of iron, and brought the power of oil, coal, steam, and electricity into subjection to human wants.

As modest as are his means, he steps from his cottage into a vehicle that will, if necessary, transport him 100 miles per hour, truly a magic wagon for no person on the face of this earth knows how to make one.*

*A realization of this fact as applied not merely to automobiles but to thousands of other productions will aid one in appreciating how dependent we are on a wide admixture of energies. Reflection will readily reveal that these energy confluxes are by far more the result of natural than man-directed organization, that is, these energies gravitate naturally and affinitively toward satisfying human demands as distinguished from being put together by any single-minded direction. Successful head men, or leaders, of corporations and other organizations are themselves the suppliers of a relatively scarce and essential energy; for instance, they are adept at selecting persons who have creative energies to release and who won't inhibit the like energies of others in the enterprise. The good head man is the one who gives others "their head" and, by example and suasion, sees to it that his associates do the same. The good head man does not blueprint, arrange, and command creative energies; for he realizes his own limitations. He is a specialist in getting creative energies released along valuable lines.

It is impossible not to be struck with the measureless disproportion which exists between the enjoyments which this man derives from others and those he could obtain by his own unassisted exertions. *I venture to say that in a single day he consumes more than he himself could produce in ten centuries!* What renders the phenomenon still more strange is that all other men are in the same situation. Every individual member of our society absorbs untold amounts of energies he himself could not produce.

Yes, the example of our nurseryman could be extended indefinitely. Yet, there is not a living person who could precisely explain these energy phenomena. They defy definition and complete understanding, as does electricity or one's own autonomic nervous system. We can but observe these phenomena with care and make deductions therefrom.

Victims Of Hallucinations

THERE is, however, one unmistakable fact that can be gleaned from observation: Authoritarianism (aggressive force) is a fake! There is not a man nor any set of men who should ever have authoritarian power over creative energy and its exchange. Man's forceful intervention can only thwart, restrain, detain, repress, destroy. Let man intervene in the affairs of others only to restrain destructive energies; otherwise, insofar as others are concerned, *leave human energy alone!* Contemplate the utter absurdity of any person's directing the energies relating to one day in the life of our nurseryman! What man, then, is ever to be trusted who thinks he could direct the energy and energy exchanges of a whole nation of people? Does it not seem

obvious that authoritarians are the victims of hallucinations, for do they not believe that God's role is in no sense beyond their competency?

It is the riddance of authoritarianism in all its forms about which we need to concern ourselves socially. Authoritarianism is destructive, vicious energy.*

Man's intervention to restrain destructive action demands a society-wide organization—government. It is this defensive intervention that justifies as well as sets the limit for government. The defensive function is extremely difficult and calls for experts in the science of defense. The fact that incompetents get elected or appointed to public office, and substitute aggressive meddling in others' affairs for the defensive work which they find they cannot or will not perform, in no way lessens the need for government limited to defense.

Clichés

OF late, however, we have become the victims of skillful selling by meddlers. Many of us are coming to believe in the meddlers and their meddling or, if not, to give way to their blandishments—to their guns if in Russia, to their epithets if in America. "Back to the jungle," "What would you do, let them starve?" "Property rights are above human rights," "Harsh," "Severe," and other derogatives seduce those who are gullible and frighten the weak-hearted.

*The use of repellent or defensive force does not qualify as destructive energy. If a person attempts to destroy me and he is destroyed by my defense, it is he who is accountable for his own destruction. He initiates the act that brings about his downfall. In effect, he commits suicide.

These frightened folks join the ranks of the modern Robin Hoods who are "kind," "considerate," "charitable," "liberal," "humanitarian." These terms are put in quotes for these are the virtues they falsely ascribe to themselves.

The Purpose Of Liberty

IN concluding this essay, it is well to emphasize the idea that every living human being, if he would correctly interpret his own welfare, has a vested interest in the creative emergence of every other human being; that each person has a vested interest in the free, uninhibited flowing and exchange of the energies thus released; that the true interests of all, therefore, are in harmony; and that, finally, every individual has a vested interest in common with all other men in restraining all inhibitory influences to creative energy and creative energy exchanges. It is this latter common interest that constitutes the social aspect of man and warrants his organization of government within societies for defense. All else is individual, voluntary, and co-operative as individuals may choose; for all else is creative. This is the vast, indeed, the infinite, area of emergence.

Emergence—man's highest purpose—has two primary requirements. The first is an awareness of an Infinite Consciousness that man's emergence may have conscious purpose and direction. The second is liberty in order that emergence may be uninhibited and possible. Liberty can be defined, psychologically, as man freeing himself from his own negations and, sociologically, as man not playing God, either individually or collectively, through government or otherwise.

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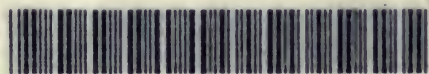
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